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[GRATIS.]



[MEREDITH THREATENS TO PROCLAIM LORD SANDOUN'S FORMER LIFE.]

MAN AND HIS IDOL.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

HOW IT HAD HAPPENED.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends
Rough-hew them as we will.

So the great poet of human life puts it, and the experience of every day confirms the truth of his assertion.

What we call accident, chance, coincidence, for we have many names to express varieties of the same thing, influences affairs much more than design. All of us, in looking back at the current of our lives, must see how often the merest trifles have given an unexpected course to events—how the most unconsidered actions have brought about the most startling events.

It was one of these accidents that led to the appearance in court of the two witnesses—Lotty and Steve Broad—whose evidence was fatal to Mark Allardyce.

You will not have forgotten Lotty's anger at finding that she had been entrapped into the house in Great Queen Street, by the note Lord Sandoun had written her, only that she might not be able to give evidence at the trial.

Her passionate resentment knew no bounds.

While Sandoun, with a grin upon his handsome features, selected a cigar from his purple-velvet case, embroidered with the family arms, and lit it with provoking deliberation; while he leaned his elbow on the marble mantelpiece, and, while sending forth spiral jets of fragrant smoke after the manner of connoisseurs, examined his faultless parting in the mirror, and when satisfied with this, he threw himself back on the couch, and with one arm under his head, stared vacantly at the painted ceiling—Lotty never ceased to pace the room to and fro, to and fro like a caged panther.

"You're making yourself a nuisance, Lotty," the young lord drawled out, at length, rolling his eyes round towards her.

She stopped, looked at him, and a spasm of anger convulsed her face.

"Where is that woman gone?" she asked, not desiring to notice his insulting remark.

It was of Flora she spoke—of Flora, who, at her first angry outburst, had run laughing from the room.

"To look after that friend of yours, I fancy," he said, not at all offended; "the gentleman who came up in the train with you."

"He?" she shrieked.

"Yes—he. Why not? Haven't I told you he's our prisoner? And prisoners must be looked to, you know. By the way, what'll you take?"

If she could have killed him with a look she would have done it; aye, deeply, devotedly as she still loved him. As it was, the scornful expression on her face made it hideous.

"Port or sherry, biscuits, and all that kind of thing, you'll find 'em in the cheffonier," his lordship remarked provokingly; "cigarettes, too, you'll find there; you used to like a cigarette, Lotty."

She might have done; but of all foreign products at that moment the woman would have preferred a stiletto. The thought that she had been entrapped so maddened her, the knowledge that she was a prisoner was so exasperating, that she would have needed little prompting to have stabbed her handsome, tantalizing gaoler to the heart.

He did not fear her. His feeling was rather one of enjoyment. He had much the same sensation that the Indian has when he works up his tame serpents to a pitch of fury, knowing that with a breath he can charm them into harmlessness.

"Well, as you like," he went on. "And so, you don't like Mark, eh?"

"I ought to like him," she said bitterly.

"Indeed! I don't know that I quite see why?"

"If for no other reason," she retorted, "than that he has done his best to separate us."

"Ah, yes. He has behaved sensibly over this marriage business. You'll own it some day! You're a little chafed and excited just now; but you'll cool down; oh, you will! All in good time, and then you'll own that he was right, and that your game

hasn't been the wisest in the world—or the best played."

The man was so cool, so exasperatingly cool, that it drove Lotty to the verge of madness to listen to him. As to trusting herself to reply, she did not dare attempt it; but with a groan threw herself into a luxurious basket-chair, and sat tapping the ground with one impatient foot.

Sitting thus, she tortured herself with thinking. She cursed her folly and infatuation in falling into this trap; and wearied her mind with thinking how she might effect her escape and carry out her purpose, strengthened as it was by the young lord's heartless conduct toward her.

Without her Mark might get free.

In her absence, Steve Broad, whose very existence she had kept so profound a secret, partly for the man's own safety, might be tampered with, perhaps even killed—for there was but a flickering of life in him, and who could say to what lengths Mark's associates might not go?

To be kept there a prisoner at such a moment was torturing; but what could she do? Her strength was as nothing against the man lounging upon the sofa. She could not hope either to overmaster or evade him. And if she could have done so, she doubted whether she could have escaped from that room, both the doors of which were fastened on the outside, while the window, for all that it was so tastily decorated, with lace curtains and hanging plants and a bird in a gilded cage, was, as her sharp eyes detected, secured with a sheet of iron similar to those used by jewellers for protection at night.

Despairing of escape by her own efforts, Lotty gave a thought to the possibilities of rescue.

What were they?

Of all those with whom she was acting, not one knew of the trap with which she had been led. If Meredith, or Hildred, or the lawyers, had sought her, it would have been at the lodgings of her friend Carry, and she had not left word there where she was gone. No human being, so far as she was aware, had any clue to her presence in that house, or was in a position to rescue her from it.

Lotty's reflections therefore, were, on all sides, blank enough, and irritating enough; it was, indeed, with the utmost difficulty that she could restrain herself from some act of desperation.

Even to scream out, to vent her rage in furious shrieks would, she felt, be some relief. To fall upon the man she at once loved and hated, and tear him as he lay there in his placid indifference, was a temptation she could scarcely resist.

But without growing calmer, Lotty forced herself to remain quiet.

The consequence of this was that as time went on—a hour succeeded hour—the young lord, soothed by the silence, the luxurious couch, and the fragrant cigar, gradually yielded to an inevitable drowsiness. His eyelids dropped. He forgot, at first for seconds, and then for longer periods, where he was, and in whose society. Then he began to snore, very softly, but quite unmistakeably.

The noise roused Lotty.

She looked up, listened, and thought.

"If," she speculated, "it were only possible for me to open one of those doors?"

Her eye glanced from one to the other as she spoke. Neither gave her the slightest hope. There was not a trace of any fastening on the inside.

For a long, long time she sat motionless, hardly venturing to breathe lest she should arouse the sleeper, and all the time thinking and thinking with the rapidity with which the brain acts in emergencies, trying to hit upon some expedient that might save her. Presently she ventured to rise, steadying herself by grasping at the cheffonier near which she sat, and cursing her folly for having taken the basket-chair, which, after the manner of such articles, would creak and wheeze, and betray her every movement by a sound.

Still, in time, she stood erect, and then with a cautious step, stole from door to door, resolved to convince herself by actual examination that they were really fastened, and that there were no means of opening them. And this proved to be the case.

But while her hand was on the panel of one of them—that through which Flora Angerstein had appeared—it creaked sharply, and though the sound was not loud, it seemed so in that silent room.

Lotty Sandoun started up.

"Halloo! what the deuce are you after, Lotty?" he asked confoundedly.

"Nothing," she replied, with an effort at an indifferent tone.

"You'd best not, I can tell you!" he grumbled drowsily. "Hang it, you've let the fire down. Stir it. Or ring for the slavey."

"Ring!"

She caught at the idea, and could not help showing that she did by the tone in which she repeated the word.

"No, no!" exclaimed his lordship hastily, and half-waking up, "I don't mean that. It's no use. There's no one to—" He had half-dropped off to sleep as he spoke. "There's no one to—Devilish cold!" he repeated, and shrugging his shoulders, turned on his side for warmth.

The eyes of the prisoner glowed with sudden animation.

"I will try it," she said, half-audibly.

In a very few seconds the drowsy lord was snoring again, although Lotty had taken the hint to attend to the fire, and could not help disturbing him in doing so. Long, however, after the sound had recommenced, and the heavy breathing showed that Sandoun slept, the woman stood watching him—watching and waiting till she had settled her plan of operations, and had determined that he was sufficiently unconscious to warrant her in carrying them into effect.

Then, placing her left hand on the head of the sofa, so lightly that it was not to be heard, she stretched over the sleeper and with the other hand clutched at the bell-rope, which hung above him.

The difficulty was to pull the rope unheard.

She feared lest it would vibrate and so waken the sleeper, and in that case all would be defeated. To prevent this catastrophe, Lotty took firm grasp of the rope and dragged it downward, as slowly as possible, until it would come no further, then she permitted about an inch to slip through her fingers; but retained the rest which she permitted very softly to resume its original state.

Hardly had she executed this manœuvre and retreated a step, before, on turning suddenly, she perceived that the door at which Flora had appeared was open.

Lotty's intention had been to avail herself of this opportunity to dash out of the room and down the stairs; but as she was in the very act of doing so, she stopped with an expression of stupid wonder on her face.

At the door stood a girl, dressed as a servant, with a finger raised, as if to caution her to prudence.

"The prisoner understood the movement. She also

recognized the face as one familiar to her, though she could not recollect where she had seen it, on the instant. Astonished at the occurrence, she nevertheless had sufficient presence of mind not to cry out, or to betray herself by any imprudence.

With an absolutely noiseless step she moved towards the doorway, passed through it, and saw it closed behind her, and fastened by a bolt.

Then she turned to her deliverer.

"I know you?" she whispered.

The girl, she was very young and not particularly tidy, nodded, but still held up the cautioning finger.

"This way," she said.

The way was along a gloomy landing ending in a flight of stairs.

Following the girl very slowly and cautiously, Lotty could not repress her wonder and desire to know how this strange result had been brought about.

"You heard me ring?" she said.

"I saw you."

"Saw me? How?"

The girl led on a few paces, then stopping, pointed with a grimy finger to the faintest crack in the wall, against which they were passing. Lotty bent forward and put her eye to it. The crack commanded a view of the room they had just quitted, and to her infinite satisfaction she perceived that Lord Sandoun was still outstretched on the sofa, asleep as when she had left him.

The girl tugged at her skirt, and taking the hint, Lotty followed her to the stairs and down one flight of them. That had brought her, she perceived, to the drawing-room floor. Then the girl's movements, in addition to her nods and beckonings and contortions of countenance, betokened the necessity of even greater caution.

"Why?" half-formed itself on Lotty's lips.

"Muster Hangerstern is there," whispered the strange guide.

The hint conveyed in that name, Lotty moved on with renewed circumspection, and thus a long time had elapsed before they reached the ground floor. From that point the girl led on down a vaulted staircase into the basement, and at length brought her charge into a gloomy, ruinous kitchen, dimly lighted by a single candle, low in the socket. As soon as they had entered this place, the door was closed by the girl, who then, for the first time, ventured to speak out.

"You knew me?" she said, with twinkling eyes. "I thought so," replied Lotty.

"Of course. Nan, you know?" returned the other. "Nan!"

"Umps. Old mother Stott's. You racollect?" For a moment Lotty was at fault. Then the little post-office in Endle's Rents flashed across her mind, and she identified the girl before her with the strange, awkward, angular little servant she had seen playing marbles by herself, behind the counter.

"How come you here, Nan?" she asked.

"Bolted," was the brief answer.

"What, you ran away from Endle's Rents?"

"Umps! I was a fooling. She thought fondlings hadn't no feeling, she did. Leastways, I thought so. But she warn't the wust. They're wus!"

A dirty thumb, pointed over her shoulder, indicated "they" as the people of the house.

"You don't like this place?" asked Lotty.

"The goings-on is hawful!" exclaimed Nan. "I knows! I watches, and keeps my heers oping. I see you come—see you through the hole in the stairs. Heerd him say as you'd be kep' here!"

"Then you understood that I was a prisoner?"

"Umps! So I watched um and you. I heerd you and see you too. Come along—this way—threw the cellar-winder."

As she spoke, Nan blew out the candle, and opened a door, which immediately let in a gust of raw, damp, cold air. Lotty could tell that she was in a kind of vault; but at the further end of it there was a faint light. Nan took her hand, and led her to where the light faintly gleamed, and then mounting what turned out to be an empty barrel, lifted a grating, and moved it from the opening it covered.

In a few hurried words, the strange creature intimated to Lotty that it was her only chance of escape, and, by dint of much exertion, the woman scrambled and squeezed herself up into the open air, and into what appeared to be a kind of forecastle.

"You oping the gear, and walk out," said the voice from the cellar.

"Thank you—thank you! Good-night, Nan!"

"Good-night, ma'am. Put the gratin' back. Good-night!"

The voice sounded faintly; when Lotty had replaced the grating, and spoke again, there was no response. The girl had disappeared.

With a heart bounding with gratitude and hope, Lotty rushed through the gateway, and down the street, never stopping to see where she was going, till she had taken the first turning that offered, and was out of sight of the house.

Then she set herself to find the nearest way to Carry's lodgings.

On reaching the house, she admitted herself with her own key, as quietly and dexterously as possible, and stealing up into the drawing-room, presented herself like a ghost to the alarmed Carry, who was sitting on the hearth-rug, rocking herself to and fro in an advanced stage of misery and gin. The first impulse of the alarmed girl was to go into hysterics; but Lotty promptly checked that tendency, and then, as well as she was able, drew from her companion a statement of what had happened.

Steve Broad's departure overwhelmed her with dismay.

For a long time the two women sat over the fire—there was no light in the room—talking of what had happened, and speculating as to what was best to be done. Carry could think of nothing—advise nothing. She could only reproach herself in the very choicest slang—in which, we know, she was an adept—for her thoughtless folly in leaving the house even for a moment.

While they thus talked together, a cab stopped near; then there was a rap at the street-door—a modest rap, but one quite audible to them.

Lotty got up, opened the drawing-room door, and listened.

There was the murmur of voices in the passage below. One of those voices was that of a woman.

"'Tis she! Flora!" said Lotty, aloud.

The remark conveyed no information to Carry, who only sat wondering, and rocking to and fro, as her friend disappeared upon the dark landing.

It was a quarter of an hour before Lotty returned. When she came her face was very white, and her eyes blazed with excitement. She did not say where she had been—she did not explain that she had crept down to the room into which (as we have before described) Flora Angerstein was admitted by the Vampire, and had overheard the conversation between them relative to Long Bob, Steve Broad, and the padded-room. All that she communicated was in these words:

"I have found him."

"Found him! Where?"

"Here."

"In this house?"

"Yes. Give me a light, and hush—not a word!" Carry's hand trembled, so that it was very difficult for her to take the candle from the table, and light it after her own fashion, by dropping the tallow into the fire until it made a blaze, at which she could ignite the wick. Lotty was not much better; but between them they obtained a light.

Then Lotty said:

"Keep this door shut, but watch behind it. If any of the wretches of men try it, pretend to be gone to bed and don't open it. But if you hear me tap with my finger-nail once, so, open it instantly."

Saying this she took the candle and stole up the flight of stairs that led to the attics.

On reaching the top, Lotty found herself next the roof and a trap-door above her head suggested itself for a moment as a means of flight. This idea was, however, immediately abandoned as impracticable. Looking round her, the woman saw only one door, it was that of a bedroom evidently occupied by Long Bob, and was as wretched and cheerless as it could well be. A glance showed Lotty that it was empty, and she thanked God for that.

The conversation she had overheard had prepared Lotty for a difficulty in finding the padded room to which reference had been made, but evidently it was on this floor.

The walls around her were of wood, whitewashed, but grown dingy with age. Each plank seemed like its fellows, of the same colour, and size: alike as to the mode of its fixture, with the same nails, and so forth.

Lotty examined one after the other, and might have done so in vain; but while she was thus engaged, a deep groan sounded close to her ear, subdued, but sufficiently loud to be heard.

"That is Steve!" she muttered.

The sound served as a clue to the side on which the padded room was situated; but the difficulty was not removed. The planks on that side, as on the others, were all alike, and appeared to her firmly attached to the wall. The closest scrutiny failed to reveal traces of lock or hinge, of secret spring or bolt. On neither of the boards were there any finger-marks, nor was there so much as an indentation to afford a hold for removing the planks.

Passing the light over the wall, Lotty could perceive no mark of any kind except two gashes, evidently made with a knife before the planks were whitewashed. These gashes were neither deep nor conspicuous. Besides, the whitewash rendered them nearly invisible.

Lotty could never tell why the slight marks attracted her attention, or what put into her head the

idea that they might be a clue to the secret of the place: but placing the candle on the ground, she raised her hands, and dug her nails into these gashes—they were on a level with her head—and as she did so, she felt that the planks moved.

The next moment she had dropped her hands, and bent cowering over the light to hide it from observation.

A sound of voices and footsteps had caught her ear.

Evidently the Vampire was letting out his guest, Flora Angerstein, and the sound echoed up the hollow staircase. Lotty's only fear was that the Vampire might be coming to show the woman his prisoner, and so might detect her. From this momentary dread she was soon, however, relieved by a hoarse "good-night!" as spoken by the Vampire, and then all was still.

Having waited a few moments, Lotty rose, again placed her finger-nails in the slight marks on the wall, and found the planks yield as before. Three planks, united as one, moved, sinking down into the floor an inch or two, and leaving a narrow opening at the top of them. By means of this Lotty was able to gain a firm hold, and then found to her intense satisfaction that the three boards constituted a door, arranged on the principle of a window-sash, and playing with the gold box from which he drew it.

Sandoun started up, flushed with anger.

"Impatient! how can a man be otherwise?" he asked. "Have you any idea of what's out against me? Do you know how short my means are running? Will it be news to you if I say that, unless something is done, another month will see me outlawed?"

"Indeed!"

His grace uttered the exclamation in the same tone in which he might have heard that some casual acquaintance had asked after his health.

"There is no mistake about it!" said the young man. "Look at that!"—he tossed a piece of parchment towards the duke as he spoke—"It was out against me yesterday; and it was only by the luckiest chance in the world—such a chance as wouldn't occur to a man again in half a century—that I contrived to give the fellows the slip, and it can't be for more than an hour or two at most!"

The duke took the parchment, and fitting on his gold eye-glasses, read with much apparent interest the following words:

"C. P. C. Sa., on judgment.—Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, to the Sheriff of Middlesex, greeting. We command you that you take Archibald Ingelow Sandoun, commonly called Lord Sandoun, if he shall be found in your bailiwick, and him safely keep, so that you may have his body before our justices at Westminster, immediately after the execution hereof, to satisfy Levi Levi, Israel Cohen and Morgan Petherick for the sum of five thousand pounds, full amount of judgment and costs, which the said —"

"Why, Archy!" said his grace, throwing down the parchment, and looking up with affected astonishment, "this is a writ!"

"Of course it is. What did you think it was?" returned Sandoun.

"You have raised the money, of course?" said the duke.

"Raised it? Raised five thousand pounds?" retorted his son, staring at him across the table. "Do you think money is raised in an hour, like mustard and cress?"

"Like what?"

"Mustard and cress."

"What may that happen to be?" asked the duke, with a puzzled air. "I protest it is new to me. But as to the writ, it is disreputable, you know, that this sort of thing should be going on. You should have your wits about you. Money you may not have, but you are a peer's son, and that is an inheritance in itself. You can always negotiate your name, and when the paper fails, negotiate again to meet it, and so on. For twenty years, my dear boy, I've not had—I protest I have scarcely seen a shilling—though I believe the coin is still in circulation; I have ceased to believe in capital. I only know of interest. When I need money I borrow; when the interest is due I borrow to pay it; when what I then borrow drops up again in the form of more interest, I borrow more, and so on. You see the process is very simple."

"So simple," replied the youth, "that it has utterly ruined you, and will drive me out of the kingdom. In a word, sir, this is a crisis with me —"

"As a politician I don't believe in 'em," interposed the duke.

"The time has come when I must do something. And before I take any step, I must have your decision about this marriage. Will the conviction of Captain Allardice be an insuperable bar to it, in your judgment?"

The duke thought for a moment, scratching his chin as he did so.

"No, no!" he said, slowly; "taken by itself I can't say that I think it would. 'Tisn't pleasant to have one's relatives hanged—it's so deuced vulgar. Why they abolished the axe and the block I can't think. Several of our family suffered on Tower Hill; but one gets over that. And I suppose one would manage to forget that one's stepson had been—what do the vulgar call it? I recollect, 'scragged,' that's the word, even if one could not get the royal pardon, which isn't impossible. But there's the other affair —"

"You mean about the claimant to the estates?"

"Precisely."

"That's all settled."

"How?"

It was the first time his grace had permitted himself to display the slightest interest.

"That has been managed," said the son. "The whole thing depended on the proof of a marriage between Rupert, the late Earl of St. Omer and a person who passed as his first wife. That marriage, it is pretended, took place at Montreaux. It came to my friend, Thaddeus Angerstein's knowledge that Plunkett—you know Plunkett?—had sent a special messenger over there to search the register. He immediately telegraphed to a tool of his, one Victor, belonging to a gang of desperadoes in Paris, and he posted off to Montreaux, and found the man there. Singularly enough, the room in which the records were kept, caught fire, and Victor charged the Englishman with having fired it. The man was arrested and his papers were taken from him. I believe he managed to escape; but that's of no consequence. The fire and the arrest entirely frustrated the object of his mission, and has left St. Omer nothing to fear."

"Dear me!" cried his grace, who had listened to this narrative with the eye of a hawk, and with dilated nostrils, "how interesting. Quite an episode in the history of our country. You tell it very well, too, Archy; but I wouldn't advise you to tell it to anybody else, for all that."

There was a grin upon his face as he spoke.

"Having heard this," said Sandoun, "what are your views?"

"About what?"

"About the marriage. Do you still think it good policy?"

"My dear boy," said the duke, in his most insidious tones, "I think it the only course to procure your happiness. The Lady Blanche is a charming creature—charming. I see that, in spite of your assumed indifference, you love her to distraction. You shall have her. I will see St. Omer this very day. Drop in at the club to-night. God bless you, my dear boy!"

And he went—the hollow, insincere, but polished old man—and having fortified himself with a glass of sherry and a biscuit, devoted himself to the business of his committee, as if his own affairs were in the brightest condition imaginable.

Sandoun had come down to the house in a closed cab.

The experiment was a dangerous one, for he was watched on all sides; but it had struck him as being necessary to see the duke, and it was long since he had ventured near the ducal residence, around which suspicious characters were always lying in wait.

Having been successful so far, he thought he would try another venture and go down to St. Omer's. If the connection was to be kept up he must visit them, and this morning offered as good an opportunity as might occur—perhaps better. He had given the imps of the law the slip, partly by bribing, partly by good-luck; but how far he might be able to keep the advantage he had gained, was quite another question.

To-morrow he might be safe under lock and bar.

On reaching the house, the footman told him the earl and his daughter, the Lady Blanche, were out in the brougham, and that the countess was too indisposed to receive visitors—a fact which, from his knowledge of her affection for Mark, he could easily credit.

It was an annoying state of things, and Sandoun hardly knew what to do. The Angerstein's place was attractive, and safe; but he had heard that Flora was much "cut-up" over Mark, and he hated crying women. Besides, he might be devoting his time to business. He had known Plunkett for years. He would just drop in and see how the failure of his messenger at Montreaux had affected his views on the marriage question.

On alighting at Plunkett's offices he learned with surprise, and not without vexation, that the Earl of St. Omer was there.

"Would he wait?" the chief clerk asked.

"Well—yes, he would."

And he moved towards the familiar green-baize door of the clients' waiting-room.

"Beg pardon. Not that way," said the clerk, who appeared particularly officious, doubtless for some good reason. "It was occupied. A lady and gentleman were there."

It was a cold day, and while mentally cursing the lady and gentleman who had possession of the snug waiting-room, the young lord sauntered up to the fire in the clerks' office, and turning his back on it, stretched out his legs and warmed himself, keeping an eye on the door of the room while he waited.

How little did he guess what was passing behind that door!

How greatly would it have disturbed his quiet, placid look, could he have seen the speakers and listened to

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE MEETING AND THE PARTING.

It is your voice! 'Tis sweet to hear you talk! While you speak thus to me, my heart is rent By two emotions—happiness and pain:

Your accents bring delight, and always must To me, albeit your words convey despair. *Anon.*

On the day after the remand of Mark Allardice, there was an early sitting of the House of Lords, and the Duke of Harford went down to be present at it. His grace had gained a temporary victory over his old enemy the gout, and was making the best of it, by going to vote on some question connected with a railway bill, which affected the private interests of some friend of his a great deal more than it did the public welfare, and so claimed his special attention.

In the lobby of the House the duke met his son.

They sauntered together into one of the private apartments, at the service of the peers, and there his grace hobbled to a chair, and waited for what Archy had to say.

"You've heard the result of yesterday's affair?" asked Sandoun.

"I read my *Times*," was the evasive reply; "as I

a conversation which was being held there, almost in whispers!

As St. Omer's footman had stated, his lordship had, with his daughter, driven out in the brougham. They had proceeded direct to Mr. Abernethy Plunkett's offices, the earl having felt it his duty to see the lawyer upon his abrupt statement a few nights before.

On arriving there, the earl had been shown in, and Blanche remained in the brougham, amusing herself with the morning paper.

As she sat there thus half-occupied, she became conscious that some one was looking at her through the glass of the vehicle, and she raised her head quickly and looked out.

Her eyes met those of Kingston Meredith.

By an impulse, which she could not have justified, even to herself, she seized the embroidered band hanging at her side, and let down the window.

It was a simple act enough; but how important! It was a concession, a first advance, which warranted Kingston in following it up. But for that act he would have passed on, contented with the one passionate glance with which he had irresistibly regarded her. Now the barrier was broken down and there was no longer any reason why he should stand aloof.

Bitterly in the first moment did Lady Blanche regret her impetuosity. The thought of what might result from it made her tremble with fear and apprehension. She would have given anything to undo what she had done; but it was too late.

Meredith was at the carriage-door.

Words were passing between them—common-place, incoherent words, which neither of them could afterwards remember.

And then somehow—for all passed as in a hazy, but happy dream—Blanche had quitted the brougham. It had been ordered to return in a quarter of an hour the chief clerk had guaranteed the sanctity of the waiting-room, and the lovers were seated there, in that dingy apartment, side by side, as in a heaven of their own creating.

It is constantly so in life. Propriety surrounds us with her seven brazen walls, and, in some unguarded moment, impetuous passion overleaps them at a bound. It was not prudent, it was not wise, I am not even prepared to say it was right—this meeting of the long-parted lovers, this forgetfulness of all that society demanded of them. But you will not think the worse of Blanche? You will not pour out your indignation too fiercely on Meredith's devoted heart? Remember all that had passed; bear in mind also the opportunity and the temptation. Then listen to what passed.

For some seconds Meredith, unable to realize the sudden bliss which had come upon him, held the hands of his beloved in his own, gazing upon her in an ecstasy, while she—as is the habit of her sex—veiled her over-joy in glistening tears.

"Oh, Kingston!" cried Blanche, "you will think me—I fear to guess what you will think of me!"

"Dearest," he answered, "if I could believe that this was real—that we were not standing here in a dream! Oh, Blanche! my own, my own, through what a sea of trouble we have passed! And my own mad fears, my groundless jealousies, my gross suspicions, have been the cause of all—of your tortures and of mine! If I had held my faith in you, unshaken by a disloyal thought, we should have passed unscathed through this ordeal, and all would have been well!"

"All shall be well!" she cried, pressing his hands in hers. "The dark past has rolled itself away; it is the bright future that lies outspread before us. No reproaches, darling! Think of what our trials have been! Think of our foes! We have desponded; but who would not? We have half-doubted—surely doubt itself might be forgiven us! But, oh! to think that, amid all, our constancy, so sorely shaken, has never yielded. That is indeed Elysium! But, darling, I am forgetting. Even now all is not over. We do but pluck this flower of happiness upon the brink of the precipice. I am not even free!"

"To love?"

"Ah, yes; but not to act as my heart prompts. Oh, Kingston, the very trouble that has come upon us—this terrible charge, which threatens Mark, and is hurrying the countess to the grave—widens the breach between us. The earl, my father, proudly sensitive, feels the disgrace of this public trial, and of the possible sentence that may follow it. He cannot forget that Mark has become of our family, and he is nervously anxious to cover any disgrace thus brought on us, by an alliance with a higher and a yet older branch of the peerage."

"He still contemplates Sandoun as your possible husband, then?" asked Kingston.

"Yes. He only regrets the barrier that circumstances have raised between us."

"But surely rank is not all he seeks?" pleaded the young man. "The duke's bankrupt state, his son's

notorious life, and the ill-repute in which he stands—would not these things weigh with him?"

"Rank is a great beautifier!" said Blanche, sadly. "When once you have yielded to its fascinations, it is hard indeed to fight against them. There is only one power that is superior to it. The poet is right, Kingston, when he tells how

"Love like death

Levels all ranks and lays the shepherd's crook
Beside the scythe."

Kingston listened to these words like one entranced. He felt their meaning as only one situated as he was could feel it; but, in spite of all that Blanche could say, his heart sank within him at the thought of the earl's intensified ambition.

"Blanche!" he said at length, striving to overcome his emotion, and to give utterance to what was weighing upon his mind, "can the earl, can you, ever forget the steps I have taken—Mark's exposure and—the claims I have set up? A horrible fear has haunted me that you must have regarded me as the enemy of your family, and believed that, while I pretended to be asserting a right, I was persecuting those who had thwarted my wishes. Was this so?"

It was a delicate question, but Blanche did not shrink from it. She was so pure, so simple, so genuine that it could not shock her.

None but those who are blessed with them can estimate highly enough free, open natures, like those of the earl's daughter. They conceal nothing: they have no secrets, no reservations. They do not sham one feeling while acting upon another. They do not use words to hide and distort their real meaning, and so to mislead and betray those who listen to them. And their reward lies in this, that they are never surprised in a meanness, never detected in an untruth, never "found out," as the expressive phrase puts it, and fearing nothing, they are never perturbed or embarrassed.

Blanche's reply was in few and simple words.

"Others might have misconstrued your motives, Kingston," she said; "I never did. There were moments when I have feared that the love you had felt for me had died out; that you had grown indifferent, or that my apparent cruelty had disgusted you. But I never questioned your sincerity. When the startling news came that you believed yourself related to our family, and had superior claims to the earldom and the property, my heart told me that you had real grounds for what you were doing. And when I learned that circumstances had made you take a prominent part in the prosecution of my unhappy half-brother, my heart bled for you, for I knew how duty warred with inclination, and what a pang it must have cost you to act as you were acting against me and mine."

"My darling," said Kingston, tenderly, "whatever might have happened, I should have respected all you could yourself respect."

"You are all goodness!" cried Blanche.

"No! But you at least will believe that I care nothing for rank or wealth, except that it might give me the hope of one day calling you mine. Oh, Blanche! I am not revengeful, but my heart has longed for the day when I might seize a noble triumph; when I might be to those who have spurned me for my humble birth, 'See, I am your equal in the social scale! Your titles and your estates are mine. I could drive you forth to beggary, but for the sake of Blanche, I resign all and forgive all!'"

"And you would have done this?" she demanded.

"Can you doubt it, my darling? The time may yet come when I may prove it to you."

Blanche shook her head mournfully.

"My father," she said, "would never accept as a favour what he has held as a right. The rank he was permitted to retain would be disgraced; the wealth that belonged to another would have lost all its charm for him."

"I feel it!" said Kingston, "yet what am I to do? Any day, any hour, may give me the one link which establishes my position. If I destroy that link, what are our hopes of the union to which we both look forward? If I assert my position, what can follow but humiliation to the earl, and such consequences as I tremble to think of? But enough of this to-day. That difficulty has not yet arisen; it is a still heavier one which weighs upon my heart. Oh, my darling, it is hard to feel that we may be meeting for the last time."

"The last time!"

She had not thought of that. In the sense of recovered love and trust all else had been forgotten. Yet it might be true. They could hardly hope to renew this stolen interview; it would be wrong, she thought, even to promise to do so.

"I have but one hope," said Kingston. "Only this morning I have received the papers ratifying my appointment to the colonial judgeship. You have heard of my good fortune?"

"It is true then?" she asked, anxiously.

"Yes; I can enter on my duties at once. I can

work. I shall have a chance to rise. I—But you are pale; you are trembling Blanche. You fear—"

"Kingston!" cried Blanche, "do not try to deceive yourself. I have heard all. This pretended kindness is not for your good, but for your ruin. They are sending you out of the country to kill you. Sierra Leone is the white man's grave. You will only go there—to die!"

He knew that well enough; but he would not have hinted it to Blanche for the world. Some hope was in his heart that he might succeed where others had failed; that the poisonous malaria might spare him as it had spared some. But since, by some luckless chance, Blanche knew all that he knew, he felt it useless to pursue the theme.

"Your fears magnify the evil, darling," he ventured to urge.

"No, no! promise me—it is the only favour I can ask of you—promise me that you will return these papers and abandon the idea of rushing upon self-destruction. Will you not promise this?"

"I will—I do! And then—"

He paused.

That look gone, the chances of the earldom reduced to vaguest shadow, what was there to look to? On what could he place the hope of ever calling Blanche his own?

As the lovers stood, this question weighing upon their minds, there suddenly came a sound of wheels. They looked up—it was the brougham, the signal that their time had elapsed.

Hurriedly, they exchanged impassioned farewells, full of bliss, yet full of anguish also. To have met again after all their sufferings was joy indeed; but how bleak, how desolate was the future in sight of which they parted!

The Lady Blanche was the first to quit the waiting-room.

Her veil was down, but it was with the utmost trepidation that she ventured out into the clerks' office. She feared, she hardly knew what, and shrank from the scrutinizing eyes of the clerks which she was sure to encounter there, with a feeling to which she was usually a stranger.

Yet she little anticipated what would occur.

As the door of the room closed behind her, she was startled by a sudden exclamation:

"Blanche!" cried a familiar voice.

At the same moment, Lord Sandoun advanced from the fireplace, before which he had been standing and confronted her.

Of all men, she would have avoided him at that moment; but the meeting was inevitable. And she was on the point of murmuring some apology or explanation, when the young lord startled her into an assertion of her dignity by a simple question.

"What are you doing here?" he asked bluntly.

"What—am—I—doing?" she echoed, throwing back her veil, and meeting him eye to eye.

"Yes. I've a right to know. What brings you here?"

"I came here with the earl," said Blanche with great indignation, and turning as she spoke, as if to leave the office for the brougham.

Sandoun put his hand upon her shoulder.

"There was a fellow with you in that room," he said, "who was it?"

Before Blanche could reply, the door opened, and Kingston Meredith stepped forth.

"I have had the honour of an interview with her ladyship," he said. "What then?"

"You!"

The young lord was so startled at this unexpected denouement, that he could find no other words in which to express his astonishment.

"Yes," said Meredith, calmly. "If you have any objection to urge, I am ready to reply to you."

Blanche did not like the glances which flashed from the eyes of the two men, as they stood close together.

She would have interposed with a word; but a movement on the part of Meredith restrained her.

"I have neither the time nor the inclination to waste words upon you, sir," was the young lord's answer; "but let me tell you that this lady is engaged, and to me! Engaged, sir; you know what that means!"

"I know that in your case it means nothing," cried Meredith, unable to control himself.

Lord Sandoun's face flushed crimson. His eyes blazed.

"Take care, sir," he muttered between his closed teeth.

"Oh, I don't fear you," replied Meredith, recalling the information Leon Marne had given him in the French capital. "Though you are good at sword and pistol, I know—I have read *Alighani!*"

Sandoun recoiled.

"What do you mean?" he muttered.

"Do you wish me to proclaim," whispered Mer-

dith, "before all these fellows,"—he pointed to the clerks—"that you have been posted in the gaming-houses of Paris?"

"For God's sake, no!" the young man involuntarily replied.

Meredith turned to Blanche, and, raising his hat, said:

"Shall I have the honour of seeing your ladyship to your brougham?"

"There will be no ill-blood," she faltered; "no dreadful meeting."

"Nothing of the kind, I assure you—oh, my lord? His lordship and myself are, I believe, the best of friends from this moment."

He turned to Sandoun, who returned the salute with studied ceremony.

But as he stood watching the young man lead Blanche to her carriage, there was a scowl upon his handsome face, and he was plotting revenge.

"The man who knows what he has found out, knows too much for my safety—and his own."

So he muttered.

And there was nothing in his thoughts, words, or looks which betokened good for Kingston Meredith.

(To be continued.)

THE MANIAC BRIDE.

CHAPTER I.

It was midnight. The noise and confusion of the day had given place to silence; but amid the deep gloom and darkness of night, a bright light streamed from the windows of the elegant dwelling of Mrs. St. Eban.

It was no rare occurrence, by any means, that her dwelling was lighted at the midnight hour; for many scenes of gaiety had been enacted within the walls of that stately mansion; but the scene that now presented itself was of a far different character.

The once gay, happy, and wealthy woman of fashion, was stretched upon her dying couch—the voice of music and gladness was hushed; the heart which had so lately beat with gratified pride now lay in the agonies of death. Silence, deep and unbroken, save by a sob now and then from the haughty watcher, reigned through the chamber of death.

Edith St. Eban was what the world would call beautiful. Her eyes were black as jet, her hair dark as a raven's wing—she wore it bound in plain bands around her queenly head. Her forehead was high and of almost alabaster whiteness; her nose Grecian; her mouth small and well-shaped, and yet there was something strange, almost demon-like, in the smile that played around her red lips; there were scorn, passion, and fixed determination depicted in the haughty curve of that smiling mouth.

Mrs. St. Eban, the mother of our heroine, was early left a widow, in possession of a large fortune. After the death of her husband she plunged into the gaieties and follies of fashionable life, with a wild, reckless extravagance.

She had surrounded herself and only child with every luxury and elegance, but death, the grim destroyer, had marked fashion's votary as his victim, and she must leave behind all these elegancies, all this pomp, show, and fashion, and go out into the great hereafter, and appear before her Judge in another clime.

Hour after hour took their weary flight, and still the watcher retained her place. No tear stole down her velvet cheek, no sign of sorrow, save a deep, half-smothered sigh, or a choked sob, that now and then broke the stillness of the room, escaped her lips.

Ere the morning dawned, Mrs. St. Eban had passed from this to another world, and still another name was added to the list of victims of fashionable dissipation.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the death and funeral of her mother, Edith removed to the home of her guardian, Mr. Graham.

The family of Mr. Graham consisted of himself, a son and daughter; his wife having died some years previous to the death of Mrs. St. Eban.

Edith Graham was a gentle, modest, and retiring girl, of eighteen summers. She mingled little in society, and, for nearly two years, Edith remained secluded from the fashionable world; but the days of mourning passed, and she entered into scenes of gaiety which characterized her mother.

Night after night she sought the excitement of the ball-room, the opera, or the play-house. Addie Graham generally accompanied her, though she found but little pleasure in fashionable life, and often longed to fly away to some spot where parties and scenes of gaiety were unknown.

The reputed heiress of immense wealth found many admirers and suitors for her hand. She delighted to

draw around her a crowd of admirers, and if, perchance, one gay butterfly of fashion hovered around the gentle Addie, Edith became terrible jealous, and exerted herself to win his admiration from her gentle friend, and secure it herself.

At length a Mr. Harris, a young man of superior talents, appeared in the saloons of fashion. There was nothing foppish in his appearance. He was plain, almost to a fault, in his dress, manly and dignified in his bearing. When Edith returned from the party where she met this distinguished gentleman, she determined to bring him to her feet, as she had brought dozens of other men.

"It will be such a glorious conquest to bring this man of talent sighing to my feet," thought the ambitious girl.

And she left no means untried to accomplish her design. But for once her many charms and her reputed wealth failed to secure her the desired conquest. He treated her politely, but seemed entirely unconscious of any peculiar charm she possessed. He seemed rather to seek the society of the modest, unpretending, unprepossessing Addie. Edith became desperately jealous and much enraged at his preference for one she considered entirely void of attraction. So deeply in earnest had she become in this game, for such we must call it, that her heart had become interested in it. Yes, the haughty beauty actually loved—loved one who sought not her society, and she took no pains to conceal from the object of her passion the love she felt. But Mr. Harris preferred to show attention, not to receive it, and Edith commanded little encouragement from him.

Time passed on, and Addie Graham was the betrothed of Mr. Harris. The night Edith was informed of this, as she stood before her mirror, after her return from a brilliant party, taking the jewels from her jetty hair, she said:

"Addie Graham his wife—the only man I ever loved,—never! no, never shall he call her wife! If I have been foiled in this instance, I shall never look on a rival as his wife, never! If he chooses to thrust my love back in my face, he shall go through the world single-hearted. I'll revenge the insult, if it cost me my life."

Her eyes flashed with anger; the corners of her mouth were drawn down; fixed determination and evil passions moulded her classic features. She drew her white, jewelled hand through her long, silken hair, and as she stood before the mirror she looked more beautiful than she ever had in a drawing-room upon a festive night, had it not been for an idea of the terrible with which it was associated.

CHAPTER III.

THE day set apart for the wedding arrived, and Addie, happy as a coming bride should be, sat in her chamber attired in bridal costume.

Edith was to officiate as bridesmaid. She was arrayed in satin, and actually glittered in diamonds. She bent over the bride, and was about to place a rosebud amid the aburn tresses which clustered about the head of Addie, when she started and exclaimed:

"Addie, dear, how pale you look. You must take a glass of wine. Really, I thought you were going to faint" and Edith filled a glass from a bottle that stood upon a small stand near by.

She stood with her back toward the bride, and taking a small packet from her bosom, she opened it, and emptied its contents in the glass. A fine white powder for a moment rested on the surface of the wine—a moment more and it was dissolved. She took the glass with tremulous hand, and gave it to the unsuspecting girl, who immediately drank the contents.

The bridal party entered the crowded church, and stood before the altar. The clergyman stood before them with open book in hand, waiting to begin the marriage service as soon as the melody of the organ should die away among the hollow arches of the church.

But just as he was about to commence, the assembled friends were startled by a scream of agony, piercing every heart present, and Addie, pale and lifeless, fell into the arms of her betrothed. Yes, the beautiful creature who but a few short hours previous was full of life and hope, now lay a lifeless corpse in her lover's arms, and there stood her murderer, pale and terrified, but no outward emotion betrayed what was passing within.

The lovely Addie Graham is at rest in the graveyard. Above her ashes stands a monument, upon which is engraved:

In the midst of Life we are in Death.

The cause of her death was to all a mystery. Various were the reasons assigned for the sudden stroke. At length it was decided that heart-disease was the cause.

Edith again mingled in society; she was once more the reigning belle, the brightest star, the queen, before whom all hearts bowed. No change had

taken place in her, save that her brow might be shade paler, and her eyes gleamed with a fiercer, wilder light.

Mr. Harris was with her much; it was natural that he should cling to the friend of her he loved and lost, for comfort, and Edith professed sincere sympathy for him in his affliction, until he found a strange fascination about the wily girl, and yielded to it.

CHAPTER IV.

Two years have taken their flight, and again Mr. Harris stands before the marriage altar, and by his side is Edith St. Eban, in bridal attire. Her life-object was at length accomplished, but at what a fearful cost! In the dimly-lighted church the warm rays of the sun, shaded by the stained windows, fall upon the bridal party.

As the words, "I pronounce you man and wife," died upon the lips of the minister, to the utter surprise and consternation of all present, Edith, the beautiful bride, threw her arms wildly in the air, exclaiming:

"I killed her! yes, I killed her! ha! ha! ha! I, her murderer, am now his wife!"

Her voice sounded terrifically shrill in that vaulted church.

On the very spot where Addie Graham breathed her last, she, the heartless fiend, the unfaithful friend, and the murderer, parted for ever with her reason.

In the Lunatic Asylum you may see a beautiful inmate, whom you will at once recognize as Edith St. Eban. She wanders around the spacious pleasure-grounds, murmuring, "I poisoned her, I! yes, I!"

Everything that wealth can procure surrounds her, for Henry Harris is still watchful over the comfort of the maniac.

J. W. V. M.

THE LATE GEORGE WOMBWELL.—He commenced his celebrated caravan peregrinations through the United Kingdom, visiting all the great fairs, such as those of Nottingham, Birmingham, Glasgow and Donnybrook. In time he amassed a handsome independence, but could never be prevailed upon to retire to the enjoyment of ease and affluence, and he died, as he had lived, in harness. Neither did he ever abandon the closest attention to all matters connected with the menagerie, and might often be seen scrubbing and working away, as indefatigably as the humblest servant attached to the establishment. At the time of his death Wombwell was possessed of three huge menageries, which travelled through different parts of the country, and comprised a magnificent collection of animals, many of them bred and reared by the proprietor himself. The cost of maintaining these establishments averaged at least £35 a day. The losses accruing from mortality and disease form a serious risk in the conduct of a menagerie, and Wombwell used to estimate that from this cause he had lost, from first to last, from £12,000 to £15,000. A fine ostrich, valued at £200, one day pushed his bill through the bars of his cage, and in attempting to withdraw it, broke his neck. Monkeys, likewise, frequently entailed great loss from their susceptibility to cold, which frequently, as in the case of human beings, cut them off by terminating in consumption. As regards the commercial value of wild beasts, we are informed that tigers have sometimes been sold as high as £300, and at other times might be had for £100. A good panther is worth £100, whilst hyenas range from £30 to £40 each, and zebras from £150 to £200 each.—*Book of Days*.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR.—Whether the following anecdote of him illustrates his courage or his coolness, I leave your readers to determine. During a yachting cruise last autumn (the Lord Chancellor is a devoted yachtsman among his other tastes) Lord Westbury arrived at Plymouth while the Lords of the Admiralty were visiting the port officially in the Admiralty yacht. They were giving a solemn dinner to the official big-wigs of the dockyard, to which the Chancellor, on his yacht coming in, was of course invited. The guests were in full-fog, blue and red coats, epaulettes, dress-sabres, &c., when the Chancellor entered (so the story goes) in a free and easy yachting costume, and took his place with perfect self-possession. But this was not all. As dinner began, the yacht was felt to be moving. The First Lord called out for an explanation. It was furnished by the Lord Chancellor. As he came aboard, he had observed that the Admiralty yacht had not taken up her proper moorings; so he had ordered the Commodore to steam ahead to his assigned berth. And I suppose, as the Chancellor is supreme wherever he goes, the officer was bound to obey his orders. So runs the tale. "Se non è vero, è ben trovato," for everybody believes Lord Westbury far more than Lord Russell, the man to operate for the stone or take the command of the Channel fleet at ten hours' notice. When he was in

the height of his professional practice—a member of the House of Commons and a law officer of the Crown to boot—he was found by a friend one day surrounded with chemical books. To an inquiry as to his motive or this new labour, he replied that finding it necessary to give employment to his mind, he had taken up the study of chemistry. This beats Lord Brougham.

SIBYL'S CLIFF.

CHAPTER XV.

ADRIANA LOVELACE.

MRS. BELL was waiting to receive her, and led the way to a chamber she had appropriated to the use of the unexpected guest.

"We must send for the surgeon at once," said the baronet.

"Send," cried Sir Rashleigh, "I will go myself instantly."

He rushed out of the house, simply bridled his fleetest horse, and throwing himself on his back dashed away to Claremont at the height of speed. Fortunately he found Dr. Bolton just driving up to his door.

"Follow me!" said Sir Rashleigh. "There's a patient at our house in urgent need of your services."

And without waiting for further explanation, he wheeled his horse about and rode madly back to the manor-house. The doctor's horse was a fast-goer; and it was not three minutes after Sir Rashleigh's arrival, that his gig rattled into the courtyard, and he was flying up the steps of the house with the lightness of a schoolboy.

He remained a long time in the sufferer's room. When he came down-stairs, he was met by the baronet and his nephew.

"Well, doctor, how is your patient?" asked the baronet.

"No bones are broken," said the man of skill.

"Then all's well," said the baronet.

"That doesn't follow," said the doctor. "In cases of this kind, there are often internal injuries, which are only betrayed by an unexpected sinking away of the patient."

"And are there any symptoms of any such condition in the present case?" asked the baronet.

"I am happy to say that I haven't perceived any yet. I can judge better to-morrow. But do you know, Sir George, what a celebrated character you have under your roof?"

"No, I do not."

"Then I can tell you," said the little doctor, swelling with importance. "That lady, Sir George, is no other than Miss Adriana Lovelace."

"What!" cried the baronet, "the brilliant actress who has made as much of a sensation in London as Miss O'Neill or Miss Fanny Kemble in their palmy days?"

"No other, sir. She has just completed a brilliant engagement at Drury Lane, and wishing a quiet country place to recruit in, and to study some new parts in which she is to appear shortly, she selected Claremont, from its seclusion, its distance from the metropolis, and the absence of a set of people who would insist on lionizing her, and bother her with calls and invitations. Nobody but you and I, Sir George, and the curate and the apothecary, perhaps, who are posted up on all things, ever heard of Adriana Lovelace. I had seen her in London, and called with my wife the other day, to pay my respects to her. She is a perfect lady, I assure you, and enjoys a spotless reputation. You have seen her, Sir Rashleigh?"

Sir Rashleigh remembered that he had seen her in London, but said that he had not recognized her in her riding-dress.

"I shall come again to-morrow," said the doctor. "I cannot leave my patient in better hands than Mrs. Bell's. Her experience, too, will tell her if any change takes place which will render it necessary to send for me. I trust and hope that she will get along well; but I give you fair warning, Sir George, that she will tax your hospitality for a long time. She cannot possibly be moved for some weeks to come."

"The shelter of Oakland Manor House was never denied to any one in misfortune," said the baronet.

"I know it, Sir George; your liberality is famed the county over. But, gentlemen, I must bid you good-morning—I must not forget that I have other patients besides the beautiful Adriana."

The next morning Mrs. Bell announced that the patient had passed a tolerably good night, though she had suffered much pain. Dr. Bolton came bright and early, according to promise, and was at once admitted to the room of the sufferer. He inquired gently into her state, and felt her pulse.

"Doctor," said the fair invalid, "I am aware that medical gentlemen are apt to conceal the truth from their patients when it is unfavourable. Now, I must beg you to be frank with me. If my condition is

serious, I desire to know it at once. I can bear the worst, but if I am dangerously injured, it is of the most urgent importance that I should lose not a moment of the time that is left to me."

"My dear lady," said the doctor, "I can read your character at a glance. I know that you are a woman of fortitude and courage, and if there existed danger in your case, I should not hesitate to apprise you of it. I tell you in all sincerity that you are doing as well as could be hoped for."

"I am so glad to hear it!" said Adriana. "Then, in a day or two, I suppose, I can go back to Claremont?"

The doctor smiled and shook his head.

"We must not be impatient," he said, "otherwise our cure will be retarded. I am afraid that you will have to remain here two or three weeks."

"Two or three weeks a burden to Sir George Franklin's family!"

"No burden, my dear lady. The anxiety Sir George feels on your account is a positive good to him; it rouses him out of a sort of lethargy from which he sometimes suffers. And here is a house full of servants, with almost nothing to do. You could not have been laid up in a place where the care of an invalid is lighter."

"Still, I should rather be in my own lodgings. There is a prejudice against my profession," she added, with a blush, "which makes it disagreeable for me to be an inmate in a family of rank."

"Sir George has no such prejudices, Miss Lovelace. He reverences genius, in whatever line it is exhibited, perhaps because he has no pretensions to genius himself. A worshipper of Shakespeare, he looks upon a worthy interpreter of his favourite poet with something of the respect he feels for the bard himself."

"The good old man! Well, doctor, you have set my mind easy on more than one point."

"I am glad of it, for if the mind be disturbed as well as the body, our task is doubled."

Thus, though she recovered slowly from the great shock of her fall, the lovely actress was soon perfectly recovered, for the present, at the manor-house. Mrs. Bell, her constant attendant, was enchanter with her, the housemaids had no ill word to speak of her, and her praises were in everyone's mouth. She had treated the doctor to let no word of her accident get into the papers, and though the good man had been strongly tempted to send an account of it to the *Times*, incidentally mentioning that she had been so fortunate as to secure the professional services of Dr. Bolton of Claremont, he promised to obey her, and even prevailed on the publisher of the county paper to withhold, for the present, an item, which would have been of great value to him, as "no other paper had the news."

At last she so far recovered as to be able to move from her bedroom to the small boudoir adjacent, where, propped up with pillows on the sofa, she reclined by the window, and amused herself alternately by looking out on the avenues of the park where the deer strayed under the overhanging branches, or reading some favourite volume.

So soon as he learned that she had taken possession of this room, the baronet sent his compliments to Miss Lovelace, and requested permission to pay his respects to her in person. Miss Lovelace was of course honoured by the request, and eagerly embraced the opportunity to thank her host for his hospitality and unwearied attention.

Sir George had, in his youth, moved in the highest society in London, and was a severe critic of manners. No false glitter could impose upon him—he detected the true diamond at a glance. He had passed but a very few moments in the society of Miss Lovelace when he saw that she was a superior woman, that she had none of the eccentricities which genius often absurdly affects—that, in a word, her manners were genuine, and her good sense equal to her talent.

There was no melodramatic fervour in her expressions of gratitude for his kindness—her words were brief, simple and sincere, and then the subject was dismissed.

"I am afraid," said the baronet, pointing to the volume which lay on the chair beside her, "that I have interrupted your studies."

"No, indeed, Sir George; I had already laid aside the volume before I received your message. It is Shakespeare's 'Macbeth,' my favourite tragedy."

"And mine," said the baronet. "I could never tire of reading or listening to it."

Adriana opened the book almost at random, and read a few of her favourite passages.

The baronet was delighted.

"If I was not afraid of wearying you," he said, "I would ask you to continue. It is so long since I have heard Shakespeare so interpreted. It brings back younger and happier days."

Thus encouraged, Adriana read several scenes. When she laid aside the volume, the baronet praised her reading in words that evidently came from his heart.

"Do you know, Sir George," said the actress, "that those words have given me more real pleasure than the plaudits of a crowded theatre?"

"I thought that the applause of large audiences was the life of professional ladies?" said the baronet.

That depends altogether upon circumstances, Sir George," replied Adriana, laughing. "When I play, I do not think at all of the audience, I am utterly wrapped up and lost in the character I assume; and the circumstances of the play become real to me. The interruption of applause disconcerts me, unless it be entirely unheeded, which it is whenever I am fully excited—I am not vain enough to say inspired. But when the illusion is dispelled by the fall of the curtain, and I am called forward to the footlights to sustain the gaze of the glittering multitude—when I am no longer the Julia, or the Romeo, or the Rosalind of the hour—I am terrified, and ask myself how I ever dared to challenge the attention of so many people for a whole evening."

Sir George Franklin retired from this interview perfectly enchanted with his fair guest. The next day he repeated his visit, accompanied by Sir Rashleigh. Mrs. Bell was present on both occasions. We have before said that the housekeeper's position at the manor-house was that of an old friend rather than a domestic, and now, in the absence of a lady of the house, it devolved on her to do its honours to a female visitor.

Thenceforward Miss Lovelace rapidly improved. The colour returned to her cheeks, and strength to her limbs. Every attention possible was shown her by every member of the household; but none were more assiduous than Sir Rashleigh. Every day her boudoir was made a garden by the flowers that he had culled. If she expressed a desire to read a new book, the next day it had been received from London and was placed in her hands.

There was nothing in all this, perhaps, that any gentleman would not have done, but Sir George, who narrowly watched the proceedings of his nephew, suspected that he took a deeper interest in his fair actress.

"Nephew," he said, one day, as they were walking in the garden, "if I were in your place and had your opportunities, I think I should not allow them to pass unimproved."

"I am not certain that I understand you, Sir George."

"Of course not. Perhaps you will understand me when I say, why don't you make Miss Lovelace an offer, sir?"

"An actress, sir?"

"What of that, sir? Don't you know—

"Honour and shame from no condition rise—Act well your part—there all the honour lies."

Adriana Lovelace, Sir Rashleigh, possesses qualities of head, heart, and person, that would grace any position."

"I am inclined to agree with you, Sir George."

"By Heavens! Rashleigh, you are a consummate dissembler. At your age, I could no more have veiled my sentiments—But I will say no more. You have heard my opinion of our fair guest."

"But the world, Sir George?"

"Confound the world! Haven't we rank and wealth enough to defy the world? The world is a bugbear, nephew. It succumbs to the bold spirit that displays its independence, though it tramples under foot the coward that trembles at its nod."

Sir Rashleigh treasured up these words.

CHAPTER XVI.

SIR RASHLEIGH MAKES LOVE.

THE fair guest of Oakland Manor-house rapidly recovered her health under the fostering care bestowed on her in that hospitable mansion. But though her eye again brightened, though the rose-hue was restored to lips and cheek, though she was always cheerful and pleasant, still there was a tone of sadness in her voice that caused the hearts of listeners to vibrate with emotion. No one could remain long in her presence without feeling that there was some melancholy mystery in her life-story which secretly preyed on her mind. One evening she sang a song, once fashionable but now gone out of date, at the request of Sir George with whom it was a favourite. The lines ran:

I have a secret sorrow here—

A grief I'll ne'er impart;

It breathes no sigh, it sheds no tear,

But it consumes my heart.

The last words trembled on her lips—and Sir George noticed with pain that tears were coursing down her cheeks. But she mastered her emotion by an exertion of the self-command that was habitual to her, and her white fingers flew over the keys in the rapid cadence of a German waltz. When she left the piano all traces of grief were banished from her frank and handsome face.

Sir Rashleigh was speaking one day of her profession.

"I can conceive its fascination," said he, "and I can understand why so many of the profession linger on the stage, even after age and infirmity have bowed them; why, in many instances, a compulsory abandonment of the boards has even proved fatal."

"I cannot understand it, Sir Rashleigh," said Miss Lovelace. "Acting is with me a painful necessity. I first took it up for a livelihood, and now pursue it to secure an independence; for I have tasted the bitter fruits of poverty. I cannot see how it can be otherwise than distressing for a woman to appear in public. The preparation for a night's performance often makes me ill. When I played indifferent characters in pieces of little merit, I was often a victim of stage-fright. I shrank from the publicity. It is only as the representative of parts that the highest genius has created, that I can leave the consciousness of self behind, and lose myself in the imaginary being I am called upon to body forth."

"But the applause, the flowers, the incense lavished on the public's favourite?"

"Ah! it is a terrible thing to be the favourite of the public!" cried Adriana. "The public is a tiger—capricious, merciless. One night it flings you roses and orange-flowers, the next it tramples you under foot. It is constantly erecting idols but to pull them down and shatter them. Woe to the woman who incurs displeasure! The public voice called Mlle. Mars from her retirement. She obeyed and appeared on the scene of her former triumph. There was no applause—but one cruel hand expressed the sentiment of the entire audience. When it flung upon the stage, instead of the radiant bouquets to which she had been accustomed, a wreath of *immortelles*, such as they hang upon the monuments in *Pere la Chaise*, the actress took up the funeral tribute, she understood its meaning, and played no more to that ruthless and ungrateful public."

"Then you will not regret leaving the stage?"

"Regret it! The moment I bid adieu to it will be the happiest I shall have known for many years, and when I have once bade it adieu, no temptation will ever call me back to it, even for a single night."

Sir Rashleigh had drawn his chair close to that of the fair speaker. His manner was gentler than it had ever been before, and there was a timidity in it foreign to his usual bold and self-possessed bearing.

"Miss Lovelace," said he, "though I am surprised, yet I am overjoyed to hear you say that you are by no means wedded to your profession."

"I have given you my reasons for my views, Sir Rashleigh."

"I take a deep interest in all that concerns you," said Sir Rashleigh, "You have said that you would be happy to leave the stage; perhaps I can facilitate your doing so."

"You, Sir Rashleigh! I do not understand."

"I have known you but a few days, Miss Lovelace, and those few days have passed so rapidly, they appeared to me but hours; and yet I seem to have been long acquainted with you, so much a part of our household have you become. Sir George esteems you, and I—I, Adriana—pardon me for using a name that is so dear to me—I—love you."

"Why do you speak thus, Sir Rashleigh?" said Adriana, much agitated. "I did not expect this from you."

"How could I—I, whom your genius had first conquered, know you in the sweet intercourse of domestic life, where the heart ever reveals itself, without loving you? I know the prize for which I struggle, I know the extent of my boldness, and yet, yet, Adriana, I dare ask you to be my wife."

He had taken her hand, and now he looked into her eyes as if he would read her very soul. He beheld there grief, alarm, surprise, but no token of love. The colour had fled from her cheeks, her lips trembled, her very frame shook with emotion.

She withdrew her hand.

"This must not be," she said, in a low tone; "it cannot be. You have wholly misunderstood me."

"Let me, in urging my suit," persisted Sir Rashleigh, "claim the influence of my uncle, whom I know you respect."

"I respect and love him," said Adriana.

"He reciprocates your attachment," said Sir Rashleigh. "He already loves you as a daughter; it is with his sanction that I address you."

"Good, generous, old man!" said the actress.

"His home is lonely—your constant presence would brighten it, and smooth his pathway to the grave."

"Stay—stay, Sir Rashleigh," said Adriana, summoning up all her courage; "I cannot listen longer to your pleadings. I am deeply sensible of the honour you proffer me, but most respectfully as well as decidedly decline it."

"There are no obstacles to our union."

"It cannot be—I can never look on you, Sir Rashleigh, except as a friend."

"Do not—do not crush my hopes utterly," pleaded Sir Rashleigh. "Say that you will take time to consider my proposal—I will patiently await your deliberate decision."

"No, Sir Rashleigh," replied Adriana, firmly; "I will give you no false encouragement; what my answer is to-day—it will be a month, a year hence—always. I can never be other than a friend to you. Frankly and unequivocally, I could not marry you if I would, and I would not marry you if I could."

"I can give wealth and rank."

"You appeal in vain to mercenary feelings, Sir Rashleigh. Wealth and rank are no temptations to me."

"Yet wealth and rank are not to be despised."

"Yes—if they are purchased by the sacrifice of principle."

"Then it would be a sacrifice to marry me?"

"It is to sacrifice the best feeling of womanhood, to barter a hand without a heart for social station, and the luxury that gold commands. There is no place in my heart for love. For me, marriage is out of the question; my heart is dead within me."

"Be it so!" said Sir Rashleigh, rising. "Forget that I have troubled your peace."

"I cannot forget, Sir Rashleigh," replied Miss Lovelace, "that you have honoured me by the offer of your hand. I cannot forget that you have spurned the vulgar prejudices of the world in making that offer, and that Sir George has shown himself so superior to them in sanctioning your wishes. I trust we part as friends?"

"As friends, certainly," replied Sir Rashleigh, taking the fair hand which was frankly offered him; but there was something in the expression of his dark eye that belied his words.

He left the room where the interview had taken place, and closed the door gently behind him. As he was passing through the hall, he was met by his uncle, who placed his hand upon his arm.

"Where is Miss Lovelace?" he asked.

"I left her in the sitting-room, sir."

"What! leave such a charming creature alone?"

"I assure you, sir, that the lady prefers solitude."

"What's this, Sir Rashleigh? You seem agitated; and now I come to look at you, your face is as white as a sheet of paper. Rashleigh, you ought not to have any secrets from me. Have you proposed?"

"I have, sir."

"And the lady—"

"Very civilly rejected me!"

"Rejected you!"

"Yes, sir—it's difficult to account for the caprices of a woman—impossible to find a reason for the whims of an actress."

"She was only playing with you, Sir Rashleigh—as I play with a trout I have hooked."

"I assure you, sir, the lady will have no further sport with me. Sir Rashleigh Brandon asks no woman twice to be his wife. Besides, her answer was cold and definite. There's no appeal from the sentence."

"Well, this intelligence amazes me. Perhaps my intercession—"

"Sir George, I know you love me; but I adjure you to make no allusion to what I have told you in confidence. Any interference on your part—on the part of any one—will be fruitless—nay, more, degrading. I have, in one brief moment, conquered my passion, and torn the image of Adriana Lovelace from my heart."

With these words, he left his uncle, and sought the solitude of his own room. There he flung himself into a chair and laughed a bitter laugh.

"This is almost too good to be true!" he exclaimed to himself. "Rejected by a woman, who, with painted face and meretricious smiles, appeals nightly to the London public; a woman who courtises for the flowers flung to her as beggars do for half-pence—a woman who a few months since was a member of a strolling company, and ranted before a row of tallow-candles in a barn. She cannot stoop to be a baronet's wife, forsooth! Nothing short of the peerage will content my lady! Very well; she has spurned Sir Rashleigh Brandon's hand. There was never one that crossed my pathway that was not crushed like a reptile under my iron heel; and the power and will, thank fortune! have not left me yet."

CHAPTER XVII

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

WHEN Sir George Franklin entered the sitting-room he found it empty. Immediately after the interview with Sir Rashleigh, Adriana had sought the housekeeper's apartment.

Between Mrs. Bell and the guest of Oakley Manor House, an intimacy had sprung up, fostered by the circumstances in which the two women had been thrown together. The motherly care bestowed upon the invalid by the housekeeper had been repaid by a

warm attachment, springing into full-blown life, in the heart of the fair actress. In a few days their mutual attachment had made more progress than months or years might otherwise have accomplished. And now Adriana sought her aged friend, as she would have sought a mother in a case of urgency and distress.

The housekeeper saw at once that something grave had happened.

"You are agitated, Miss Lovelace," she said.

"I have reason to be," cried Adriana, throwing herself into a chair and clasping the hand of her friend. "I have a secret to tell you, in confidence."

"Whatever secret you commit to me will be most religiously kept, madam, I assure you."

"I doubt it not. Know then, Sir Rashleigh has just made me an offer of marriage."

"I congratulate you."

"Stop; I have rejected it."

"And why?"

"I could never feel love for Sir Rashleigh Brandon."

"That is reason enough. I know you too well, Miss Lovelace, to believe you capable of marrying merely to secure a position in society."

"But I have only made a half-confession, Mrs. Bell. Had Sir Rashleigh been as dear to my heart as man ever was to woman, I must—I ought to have rejected him."

"Now, indeed, you do surprise me; and I must think that you have concealed something from me."

"From you and from all. I am an impostor," cried Adriana, wringing her hands.

"You an impostor, madam!" exclaimed the housekeeper.

"Yes—but do not, I implore you, prejudge me. It is because I set more by your good opinion than that of any woman I know, that I have sought to unburden myself to fully. I am already married."

"Already married!"

"Yes—the name I bear is a feigned one. My real name is Morton."

"Morton?"

"Yes—Caroline Morton."

"And your husband?"

"I know not whether he is alive or dead. He has deserted me."

"Deserted you!"

"Yes—our marriage was an imprudent one, for both of us were poor, and we had hard struggles enough to get bread. Yet how dearly I loved him—and how dearly I thought he loved me. Poverty of itself was nothing, only the cruel separation it entailed on us. But all! how awfully was that dream dispelled; how suddenly! Fancy a young woman, an orphan, with all her happiness centred on her husband and child, looking hourly for the return of that husband, and then to receive from him this letter."

She took from her bosom a letter, and placed it in the hands of her companion.

Mrs. Bell was unable to read a line of the letter till she had put on her glasses. As soon as she had read a few lines, she exclaimed:

"Merciful Heaven!"

"You are pale—you are ill and agitated," cried Adriana. "How is this?"

"I know the handwriting," said the housekeeper, faintly.

"Then you know my husband—Arthur Morton."

"Not by that name."

"If you know him, you know one who cruelly deceived me, Mrs. Bell—who nearly broke my heart."

"The Arthur I knew, never would have broken a woman's heart, I have full faith," said the housekeeper. "This is his handwriting, or rather, is so like it, that only an expert could pronounce it a forgery—and yet, as on the occasion of another letter purporting to come from the same hand, I pronounce it false."

"And that other letter to which you allude?" cried Adriana, breathlessly.

"Was written in October, 18—."

"Is it in existence?"

"It is."

"You have it?"

"No, it was not addressed to me."

"Do not keep me in this agony of suspense," cried Adriana. "I have told you my secret, you have no right to conceal yours, if it in aught concern me to know it."

"I will tell you all I know—all you ought to know, dear lady, as soon as I can collect my thoughts. But you must leave me alone. I must search my memory and search my papers. Perhaps both will be in vain, but I am too bewildered to talk to you now. I will seek you an hour hence, and tell you then everything I know."

Adriana pressed her hand, and left the room in a state of great anxiety and agitation.

"Arthur never wrote that letter to his wife!" thought the housekeeper. "When he left his father's presence, he was full of hope and joy. He went to



[SIR RASHLEIGH BRANDON REJECTED BY MISS LOVELACE.]

seek her. If he had written that letter, he never would have written the one purporting to be addressed to his father. They are inconsistent with each other. One tells his father that he will never return to him, because he is linked with a woman who has been his ruin. The other confesses to that same woman, that he has wronged and abandoned her. They must be both forgeries, and forged by the same hand—the hand of a villain! Hush! I must not whisper his name, for I have no proof to condemn him as yet. Stay, the letter received by Sir George came on the 10th of October, 18—. I must be sure of the date, for about that time I closed a volume of a diary, which I have not had occasion to consult since. Let me look at it once more, and see if I am right."

She unlocked a bureau-drawer, and took out a small manuscript volume. In referring to the last page, she made an important discovery, with which the reader will soon become acquainted.

Sir George Franklin was sitting in the library alone, when Mrs. Bell knocked and entered.

"Sir George," said she, "I have something important to say to you, and it is of the utmost moment that we should not be interrupted. Shall I turn the key of the lock?"

"Certainly, if you think it necessary," replied the baronet, wondering much what Mrs. Bell could have to communicate, requiring so grave a preface.

After having made the door secure, Mrs. Bell drew a chair close to the baronet's, sat down, and commenced in a low but audible voice:

"Sir George, will you please to cast your eyes upon that paper?" and she handed him the letter with which she had been entrusted by Adriana.

"Why do you show me this?" cried the baronet. "I remember the handwriting but too well—it is that of him whose name has not passed my lips for years."

"Do not be hasty Sir George, but read that letter, if you please."

"Why, he is a twofold villain; false to his father, and to the woman who trusted her life in his hands."

"Pause, Sir George," said Mrs. Bell; "pause and reflect before you misapply the epithet of villain. That letter, and the one you received on the 10th of October, 18—, purport to be written by one and the same person. But your son never could have written both. He either would have abandoned one party or the other—he would have come home to you or have joined her."

"He might have abandoned both."

Yes, he might, but he did not. I say that your son, Arthur Franklin—I can speak his name boldly and

proudly, though sadly now—wrote neither the one letter nor the other. You have preserved that purporting to have been written by him to yourself?"

"Yes," said the baronet, "I did so at your request."

"When I had no reason to give you for pronouncing it a forgery."

"Have you a reason now?"

"I have the proof."

"And who could have committed this crime?"

"I have the proof of the crime and the criminal?"

"Name him!" cried Sir George.

"The letter first!"

Sir George unlocked a drawer with a trembling hand, and drew forth the letter endorsed in his own hand, "received October 10th, 18—."

"Now, Sir George, just be pleased to look at this sheet of blotting-paper. By holding it before this little mirror that stands on your table and looking close, you will perceive that the words reversed on the blotting-paper, may be read distinctly in the reflection, and that they are the facsimile of an entire page of that letter."

Sir George made the experiment, and answered:

"You are right. But where did you get this important piece of blotting-paper?"

Mrs. Bell paused a moment, and then, in a firm, deliberate voice, answered:

"I picked it up in Sir Rashleigh Brandon's room."

"Do not say that!" cried the baronet, as an expression of agony distorted his noble features. "Do not say that Rashleigh, whom I have loved and treated as a son, forged that shaft, aimed alike at father and son."

"I found that blotting-paper in his room on the 7th of October, 18—; and used it to lay on the last page of a diary which I dated on that day, and have never re-opened till this. I consulted the book to-day, to refresh my memory as to about the time when you received that letter. The impression was, therefore taken, the letter written in Sir Rashleigh's room, three days before you received the letter yourself."

"It is evidence that would stand in any court of justice."

"I can swear to the facts I have disclosed to you, and to the paper itself," said the housekeeper.

"And how came you in possession of this second letter?" asked the baronet.

"It was given me by Miss Lovelace."

"And how came she by it?" asked the baronet, in amazement.

"It was addressed to her."

"To her—to Adriana!"

"That beautiful woman is—for, of course, you do not place the slightest faith in the slander conveyed in that letter—your son's wife—or, alas! alas! Sir George, his widow!"

"My poor boy! my poor Arthur! what has become of him?"

"Have you any hopes, Sir George?" asked the housekeeper, sadly.

"Hopes? no! I am too old to hope; but this has come to me so suddenly, I do not seem to be able to think, even. Have you thought about it, Mrs. Bell?"

asked the poor old man, helplessly.

"Murder?" gasped the baronet, faintly.

Mrs. Bell's reply was inaudible; but her white lips shaped the syllables, "Murder."

"Then there is nothing left but vengeance!" cried Sir George, springing to his feet with the activity of a young man.

"Hush! Sir George, hush!" cried the housekeeper, imploringly. "We have proof of but one crime. We must take time to think before we act. I implore you to master yourself, and terrible as the trial is, meet this man as if you suspected nothing. There is no danger of his escaping you now, and by management you may bring him to confession. If Arthur Franklin is in the land of the living, that man knows where he is, and can produce him."

"It is too true," said Sir George, with a groan. "I was always frank and open in my dealings, and it will be cruel—cruel—to hide this terrible secret; but I will do so, for the present; I can only promise a little delay."

"It is all that may be necessary, Sir George. And now, will you not see this poor lady? We may safely entrust her with what we do know; and it is a duty to do so."

"Bid her come to me at once."

Adriana was sent for, and mutual explanations given, as the old baronet clasped his daughter to his heart. But their tears mingled, for both were convinced that their eyes would never more behold on earth the heir of Oakland Manor.

(To be continued.)

VISIT OF THE KING OF THE BELGIANS.—We stated some time since that the King of the Belgians meditated a visit to England. The announcement is confirmed by the Belgian press this week.



[GRANBY SAVILLE'S FIRST MEETING WITH CICELY CROWE.]

A YOUNG GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY.

By VANE IRETON ST. JOHN,
Author of "The Queen of Night," "In Spite of the World," &c.

CHAPTER XXXVII

And he is dead—the only one
On whom my hope was set;
The future now to me is blank.
Oh! would that we had met
In other days, when love to me
Was lifeless as it seems to be.

Alice Carey.

THE couple which Granby Saville had met under such extraordinary circumstances, consisted, as I have said, of a man and a little girl.

The former was a rough customer.

He was a short, thick-set fellow, with a face which appeared to have been literally battered by time.

He had had the small-pox, and it had deeply pitted his cheeks, half-closed his eyes, which nature had never made too large, and rendered his mouth unsightly.

Yet he was not altogether unpleasant-looking.

There was a merry twinkle in his eye which showed that the world had not entirely crabbed his temper, and he looked over and anon with a glance of benevolent kindness at the young girl by his side.

This girl seemed about ten years of age.

She was apparently no relation to the man. Her eyes were blue—her glossy hair, fair and curly—her form slight—her hands, ankles and feet delicate.

The man himself was dressed coarsely, with a red handkerchief bound round his head beneath his furred cap.

The girl was dressed neatly and becomingly, with the exception of the heavy boots which appeared to impede her movements.

Granby Saville having in one moment taken in these details, felt convinced that his companions belonged to the poor but not the viler class of society.

He accordingly ordered and paid for some grog for the man, and offered some to the young girl, who timidly declined.

The man seeing that Granby Saville was a good sort, became communicative.

"It's a cold and dreary night, enough," said he, "and the roads ain't of the best."

"No, indeed," returned Saville, "and certainly they are scarcely fit for the delicate feet of one so young as your little girl."

The man looked smilingly at the girl, and then answered:

"Bless your heart, sir, Venny's used to it. Ain't you Venny?"

The girl's bright eyes looked up with a smile in them.

There was no forcing such a smile as that.

She was evidently well treated.

"Oh! yes, sir, I don't mind it, sir," she said. "Mr. Muddleby's very kind to me, and we haven't got far to go now."

After a few minutes' rest, the man and girl rose to go, and were followed by Granby Saville out into the road.

"And pray," asked he, as they moved along the dark highway, "pray, what is your vocation?"

"I am an actor, sir," replied the man with dignity.

Granby smiled.

Fortunately, the night was dark, and his smile could not be perceived.

"Indeed!" he said; "and does this young lady follow also the theatrical profession?"

"She does, sir," answered Muddleby, proudly; "she is the star of the establishment."

"Where is your establishment, then?"

"It is at Burnley Bridge, just beyond where you are going."

"And how is it, then, if you have an establishment, that this little girl travels alone? Are you not afraid of her health?"

"Why, you see," said the man, "we have only one small cart. Our horse died some time ago, and we got a new one which isn't fit for the work. He ain't up to it, sir; he's like a bad actor, he won't draw. My sons—I have two—fine boys they are, sir—my sons are at the present moment both ill. So I sent them along first with the tent in the cart, and I and Venny here, followed."

"Venny!" cried Granby; "what a strange name."

The man laughed.

"Her name's Venetia—Venetia Lammerton. We call her Venny for shortness."

"And so, Venny," said Granby, in an amused tone, "you don't mind this long walk?"

"Oh, dear no!" she answered gaily; "Mr. Muddleby is very kind, and carries me on his back sometimes."

"Mr. Muddleby may be very kind," thought Granby, "but I should exceedingly like to know how this same Mr. Muddleby came to be possessed of her."

However, he deemed it prudent to say no more at present in the shape of questions; and so the trio trudged on, Venetia sometimes walking, sometimes

being carried by Muddleby, and sometimes by Granby.

Ready as she was to take her share of the fatigue, she overrated her own strength, and her arms were clasped round Granby's neck in the tight embrace of sleep when they entered Burnley Bridge.

"Where are you going to stay for the night?" asked Granby, as he deposited his sleepy burden in the arms of her protector. "I am going to the hotel—I have business there."

The man laughed.

"I'm better off than you," he said. "I've no need to go to hotels. I'm going home. Just beyond the bridge yonder, is the booth, which, I dare say, is by this time snug and tight enough. Good-night, and many thanks to you for having helped me along."

"Good-night," returned Granby. "In the morning I'll give you a look round, and see how my young friend here feels after her journey."

So saying he walked up the steps of the Prince of Wales Inn and asked the waiter if he could remain there for the night.

With a quiet smile, which was supposed to stand for a smile of assent, the waiter led the way up a narrow flight of creaking stairs into the first floor, which had the peculiarity of appearing much larger than the floor below, and gave to the mind unpleasant ideas of the fall and utter demolition of the building during the night.

This was occasioned by the fact that the bow windows overhung those below, as in the very old houses we see in ancient parts of London.

Granby Saville had very few pounds in his pocket, but upon this occasion he deemed it well to be generous. So, slipping some silver into the man's hand, he said:

"How long have you been waiter here?"

"Ten years come Christmas, sir, which—saving your presence—was a harder one than this."

"Do you remember a gentleman coming here, two or three days since, from London?"

Waiter smiled.

"Been several, sir," he answered.

Granby Saville took the hotel bill from his pocket, and showed it to him.

"Oh! yes, sir, I know, sir; gentleman, tall, rather thin; stayed only one night, borrowed a horse and rode over to Thornton; slept here and went away next morning to London."

Granby thought a moment.

"Did he say what part of Thornton he was going to?" he asked at length.

"No, sir."

"Thank you, that will do; bring me up some supper in my room here, and light a fire. I will remain here till morning."

When these orders had been completed, Granby began to revolve in his mind the *pros* and *cons* of the case.

John Shadow had, undoubtedly, visited Thornton on business connected in some way with the Castleton peacock, and had discovered something which either proved him on the wrong tack or frustrated some favourite scheme.

He rather inclined to the latter idea.

The visit paid to John Shadow by Madame Delaume, who had been introduced to him as a governess in the Castleton family, had evidently influenced the convict in his journey to Thornton.

But what was his object?

Whom did he go to see?

If this could be discovered, he would find a link in the chain which might enable him to carry on the pursuit by himself.

From all that had happened, he was firmly convinced that he was the rightful heir to the peacock.

Yet he scorned the idea of going to his father and seeking his aid.

He little knew that John Shadow had been there before him, and had paved the way for his reception.

He little imagined that there was one in that house who could swear to his identity—his own mother, whose evidence would be taken before all.

He fell asleep, thinking of a variety of confused things, and dreamed that the cloud was cleared from off Clara's reputation, and that they were about to be happy once more.

On the following morning, after partaking of a hasty breakfast, he went, according to promise, to the other side of Burnley Bridge, where a picturesque scene presented itself.

On one side of the road, just beneath some trees, whose leafless branches were white with frost, was erected a booth of tolerable dimensions.

On the front of this booth, Muddleby, and a stout young fellow, of some twenty years, were engaged in fixing a large piece of canvas, descriptive of various scenes at sea; dancers with legs and arms distractedly thrown about; girls with round, red cheeks, with enormously developed busts, and very small waists; sailors in bright blue jackets, snowy trousers, and surprised eyes; sea-monsters, horses, bulls, dogs, bears, sea-serpents—everything possible and impossible.

On one side of the booth was tethered a horse near the already celebrated cart.

In front of the booth was a little table, near which, regardless of the cold, sat five people.

This group of five consisted of an elderly lady, a younger woman, and Venetia Lammerton, with two boys, one sixteen and the other twelve.

The first three seemed ruddy and healthy with the morning air, but the two latter appeared pinched and pale.

It was not so, however, evidently from want of warmth, for they were swathed up in coats and horse-cloths.

On the table were the remains of a substantial meal, while a bottle of ominous colour proved that the Muddleby family considered it necessary to indulge in early potations, at any rate, during the cold winter months.

Muddleby advanced warmly towards Granby Saville, while Venetia rushed forward, holding out her face to be kissed.

"I am right glad to see you, sir," cried the actor, "right glad. Allow me to introduce you to the company. Ladies first, gentlemen second. Mrs. Muddleby, senior, and Mr. —— I beg pardon, sir."

"Forescuse," returned Granby, catching at the first name.

"A good and noble title," cried Muddleby. "Mr. Forescuse—Mrs. Muddleby, jun.,—my two sons, sir; look ill, sir, don't they? And here, sir, our great naval hero Tom Bowline, a relation, sir, of the original."

Saville turned with a smile to the individual who had assumed this name.

He was a young man of some twenty years, with an honest, good-humoured face, a thorough jack-tar in every way.

He made a *scrape* to Granby Saville and said:

"Cold weather, sir, this morning. Take a little to warm you?"

"Thank you, no. I'm thinking of running over to Thornton on business, and I must keep a clear head for it."

The young man flushed crimson, and then paled.

But he made no reply.

"When do you begin your performance?" asked Granby of Mrs. Muddleby, who was laughing heartily at Venetia as she sat on his knee with her eyes upturned to his.

"We commence on Boxing-night, sir," she said.

"You have begun in time, then," he answered. "I suppose you give yourselves a week to wake the people up. Well, I shall see you again, no doubt. I am now going over to Thornton, but shall return very likely before evening."

He then nodded adieu to the various members of the group, kissed Venetia, and moved away towards the railway station.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Bright were her eyes—her voice as soft

As zephyr's balmy sigh;

And trains of lovers followed her

Though none more mad than I *Old Song.*

GRANBY had just reached the platform when a hand—a rather heavy hand—was laid on his shoulder.

Thinking that it might be one of the officers who were seeking to arrest him, he started round in alarm. He was agreeably surprised.

It was Tom Bowline.

A broad grin was upon his honest countenance.

"I dare say you're rather flabbergasted, cap'n," he cried, "at seeing me here, but if you're agreeable, I'll come to Thornton with you. I want to tell you something, and ask your advice."

Granby smiled.

"Why choose me?" he said. "I am quite a stranger to you."

The sailor looked puzzled.

"Well," he said, "I don't know, except it be that I think I'm an honest man, and I'm sure you are another. The train don't start for half-an-hour, so we've plenty of time to talk."

"If I had known that, I'd have sat down at the table and had a talk to your friends."

The sailor smiled good-humouredly.

"I knew it," said he, "but as you said you were going to Thornton, I thought that it might be that you were going to see the same person as I wanted to see, and might know something of the place."

Granby shook his head.

"No," he said, "I am going on an errand, which is one of great importance to me; but on which I am led by the most visionary guides. I know no one in Thornton."

The sailor stared at him.

"You have a secret, I suppose," he answered; "well, well, I'm not going to try and worm it out. But if you'll listen, I will tell you mine. You are a gentleman, I know, sir, and might do some good to the little one yonder."

"Do you mean Venetia? She can't be your child! You're too young!"

The sailor laughed.

"Well, she was near being mine once!" he cried, "though you may think that a strange thing to say. When you hear my story you'll think it a blessed thing that I can laugh about it!"

He led Granby into the waiting-room.

"It's a sailor's story I have to tell you," he began; "but it will not be a long yarn. My name is Daniel Lewis, and I'm the son of John Lewis, the sexton of Thornton. I ran away to sea when I was fifteen, and after cruising about for many years in various latitudes, we anchored one day in the port of Cadiz."

"I had then been six years at sea, and of course was one-and-twenty. My whole heart and soul was in my profession, and I had never seen a woman who had roused in my heart any feelings of love. We were to remain at Cadiz for four days, and I obtained permission to keep on shore during our stay."

"It was on the evening of the first day that I left my companions carousing in a tavern. They were fast becoming excited over Spanish wine, and were upon the eve of quarrelling. I, therefore, who was unclined to join them in this peculiar method of enjoying themselves, stole away, and entering the streets, which were now becoming deserted, began to amuse myself by gazing at the various noticeable points around me.

"The night was very clear, so that the tall houses and the churches cast long shadows on the pavements—shadows here and there so dense as to render objects moving within them undistinguishable.

"It was just as I reached a square—the Square of St. Mark, as I afterwards learned—that I fancied I saw a man creeping suspiciously along by the wall.

"Impelled by a feeling of curiosity, doubled by a fancy that I saw the gleam of a poignard, I followed this creeping figure, and observed him station himself under the portico of one of the largest houses in the square.

"As I passed him I caught the gleam of his eye. He had a terrible expression of countenance, his lips were set, his teeth clenched, his whole attitude that of one who was waiting with a deadly purpose.

"Again, acting as if by instinct, I concealed myself in the shadows, and watched him.

"Presently along the square hurried two female

forms. The one in advance seemed to be the mistress of the one who followed at a few paces.

"I could not see the face of the man as they approached, but, from what I heard afterwards, I have no doubt it expressed at that moment the intensity of human hate. When they came opposite to the spot where he had hidden himself, like a wild beast ready to pounce upon his prey, he darted forward, and grasped the lady by the arm.

"I do not understand a word of Spanish, and I could not, therefore, at the moment make out what he intended to say. However, I could see by her actions that the lady desired to be at once rid of his company, while he appeared equally resolved to thrust himself upon her.

"He flourished his dagger in her face, and uttered loud threats apparently.

"Then, finding his menaces of no avail, he grasped her by the neck, threw back her cloak, and was about to plunge his poignard in her breast when, rushing forward, I dashed the murderous steel from his hand and stood confronting him.

"He swore at me in Spanish, at which, even at that serious moment, I could not help laughing, but as I could not answer him I knocked him down, and turned to attend to the lady.

"Thank you," she said in very good English; "thank you. That man has thrice lain in wait to destroy me!"

"Then she hesitated.

"Shall I see you home?" I said, "he might recover from my blow and follow you."

"She smiled.

"You have divined my thought," she answered. "I live not far from here, and should be most gratified if you would see me to my door. My persecutor is infatigable, and would no doubt destroy me on my very threshold."

"I saw her home.

"We said little by the way; but in the glare of the lamp which swung above her door, I saw she was very beautiful, and, for the first time in my life, I experienced a sensation of pleasure at the society of a woman. I felt pleased that to me had fallen the chance of saving this lovely creature from her persecutor.

"Good-night, sir," she said, as I left her; "good-night. If you wish to hear my explanation of the strange scene to-night, come to me to-morrow, and I will receive you."

"I bowed and left her. My brain felt in a turmoil. I think really that from that moment I was in love. I walked about the town for an hour to collect my thoughts; and then retired to the humble couch which I had in the evening I had chartered for myself.

"The next day I kept my appointment, and was ushered into a splendid apartment. The lady was there ready to receive me; and I at once found that my idea of her beauty was in no way exaggerated.

"She had dark, glossy hair, large languishing eyes, and delicate features with a light, graceful figure. I will not detain you with a detailed account of all that occurred. She told me she was a widow with one child—her late husband was an Englishman—a merchant trading between London and Cadiz; and this man who was persecuting her was a Spaniard, who, attracted by her beauty and money, had endeavoured to persuade her to marry him.

"She was now thoroughly alarmed by his threats, and was resolved in three days to quit Cadiz. I was desperately in love and felt when she told me she was going to leave the city like one who had lost his senses. To make a long story short, I followed her to Paris—deserting my ship and spending all my money on my journey and in obtaining more suitable attire. I found her out—renewed the acquaintance and at the end of a year, during which I subsisted entirely upon her friendship, she consented to become my wife, poor, friendless, prospector as I was.

"Just at the moment, when my happiness was to be completed, Venetia fell ill, and in a few weeks a fever carried her off. Had her senses remained to her, I should have become heir to all she possessed; but her relations obtained everything, and, with the exception of a few pounds I had saved, I had nothing. I thought when I saw her dying before my face, I should like to die too; but the words which in her last gleam of sense she said to me, decided me.

"Take Venetia away from them!" she murmured; and so did I. I asked the child to come with me, and she did willingly. Braving, therefore, the anger of the authorities, I came to England, and I have lived upon the scanty fare and scantier pay allowed me by Muddleby. Now, I wish to see my father once more, and yet I fear to go to him. The police at Thornton will be set on the watch, and if I am caught I shall be severely punished. Would you mind going to my father's cottage and bringing him to the inn to see me?"

Granby smiled.

"After your revelation," he said, "is that the only favour you ask? Certainly, I will see him, for of all

the people in Thornton, he will be the best able to help me as well as you. But, if you take my advice, you will remain here, and let me bring him to you. If the police are on the look-out they might see him at the inn."

"Thank you!" said the sailor; "perhaps you are right; but I don't see why I should give you the trouble."

"Never mind the trouble; here comes the train. Tell me where your father lives."

Daniel Lewis had just time to describe the residence of the old sexton, before the train came up. Granby entered, waved his hand to the sailor, and departed.

Old Lewis was at home, eating his frugal dinner, when Granby Saville entered his cottage.

He started up excitedly.

It was an unusual thing for him to have a strange visitor.

"Good morning," he said. "Good morning, sir; what can I do for you?"

Granby Saville sat down, smiling good-humouredly.

"Pray do not let me disturb you at your dinner," he said. "I have something to tell you and a question or two to ask. This I can do while you finish your meal."

Wisely imagining that it would be imprudent to speak of his son's return too suddenly, he said:

"Have you seen John Shadow lately?"

The old man eyed him strangely, and trembled violently, while his cheeks grew deadly pale.

"Who are you?" he asked, "who question me? I shall decline to tell anything unless I understand your right to know."

"Well, to you I think I may trust my secret," returned the young man; "my name is Granby Saville."

The sexton gasped for breath, and for a moment could not reply. Here, before him, was the heir to the Castleton estates—the long-lost son whom so many were mourning and some seeking. There, in yonder cupboard, was a box containing the definite proof of his identity, and yet the old man dared not speak. In the church—in the presence of death he had sworn to keep that secret sacred, and he could not reveal it.

But to say Shadow had been there could do no harm.

"Yes, Mr. Saville," he said, "he has been here."

"You have seen him?"

"Yes."

"Do you know why he came?"

"How should I know?" he answered querulously; "he is no friend of mine."

"No; but he might have told you something, or you might have seen something."

"No—no—nothing."

"You do not know, then, where he has gone?"

"No, he told me nothing."

The rapid manner in which old Lewis answered all these queries, added to his evictant perturbation, convinced Granby Saville that he was keeping something back.

"Mr. Lewis," he said, "I do not wish you to betray any trust. I, who have suffered so greatly through the machinations and frauds of others, would be the last to ask another to commit a breach of faith. But if there be anything which you can tell me—anything which can solve this terrible mystery, let me know it. The happiness of many hearts might be secured by the simple words of one witness."

This was a predicament in which old Lewis had scarcely feared to find himself. Yet he was prepared for it—prepared for it thus, that he was obstinately determined to keep the secret.

What a general folly this is!—to make a vow and compass your round with a network of falsehoods. How many persons utter ten falsehoods to keep one vow? Would not the breaking of the vow be less sin?

"It is of no use questioning me," said Lewis, gruffly, "it's waste of time—I know nothing."

Granby sighed.

"Well, well," he answered, "if you are determined not to tell, it is of no use my asking you further. But a time will come when you will regret your conduct—a time, perhaps, when it is too late for reparation. Your manner has convinced me that you do know something—the fact of John Shadow's putting up at Burnley Bridge instead of Thornton, seems to prove that his visit was to you. However, this shall not influence me. I bring you tidings of joy, and I bid you prepare yourself!"

The old man shook his head.

"Alas!" he said, "I fear there is no joy for me on earth. All I have ever loved and cherished in this world, have passed away—wife, children, friends, all gone."

"So you have thought," returned Granby, leaning forward and taking the old man's hand in his, "but I come to tell you you are wrong. You had a son?"

"Yes, he died at sea, I suppose; for many years I have heard nothing of him."

"My good news are mingled with sorrow," continued Granby, "your son lives—is here in England, near you; but he is a deserter, and in danger of arrest."

This opposing of good and evil was a somewhat dangerous experiment, yet in this case it succeeded.

The old man smiled.

"Dear Dan," he murmured, "never mind that—if he's a deserter he's my son, and I daresay they ill-used him, or he would have stopped with them. Poor Dan! where is he, sir? Can I see him? Do you know, sir, I never expected to see that dear boy again; I thought they'd keep him at sea so long that I should have been dead and buried ere he could return."

While speaking he had risen and put on his hat and cloak, and taken up his stick. A secret thanksgiving was in his heart that Daniel had deserted, that even in danger he might see him once more. Such is the selfishness of love!

In a few minutes they had left the cottage behind them, and while passing rapidly along the road towards the railway-station, Granby explained in a few words his meeting with Muddleby, and his subsequent interview with Daniel Lewis.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Who is this homeless wanderer? The snow

is not more fair or pure than her white cheek, Around whose pallid roundness ringlets toy,

As if they longed to wake her life again. How ashen are her lips—how sunk her eyes—

How languid yet how graceful her whole being.

Pray bring her in—in pity bring her in.

Nature in such a mood has scarcely kindness

Suited to one so beautiful. *The Comical Revenge.*

THEY were just nearing the station when Granby observed two men approaching.

They appeared to be eying the old man and his friend narrowly, and knowing that he himself was in danger of arrest as well as Daniel Lewis, it was with no pleasant feelings that Granby observed them and watched their movements.

Whether constables or simple travellers, they seemed to be very undecided as to their future proceedings, and loitered about the platform with apparently no definite object. They were evidently not quite sure of their prey, however, and during their peregrinations to and fro, they gave time to Granby to whisper to the old man.

"Call me Fortescue—talk to me as if I were an actor, and one of Muddleby's troupe."

In another moment they had entered the carriage, and the two suspicious characters entered with them.

During the rapid and short journey to Burnley Bridge, Granby succeeded in completely confusing the officers, if officers they were. He talked about the movements of the troupe, laughed about Muddleby's acting, spoke of the large houses they had drawn during the past six months, and of the grand performance they were preparing for Boxing-night.

He even went so far as to lean over to the men, and ask their patronage for the first night.

The old sexton spoke but little.

His thoughts were concentrated upon one point.

Not upon his son, but upon the remembrance that the man at his side had come to him to bring him the greatest joy of his old age, and that in return for this his vow condemned him to be ungrateful.

Arrived at Burnley Bridge, Granby Saville led the way immediately to the booth, where the old man saw his son—knew him at once, and threw himself into his arms.

The two men, evidently baffled, never even left the platform.

Notwithstanding this first success, Granby was convinced that his wanderings through England would be attended with no little danger.

To leave England he was unwilling.

The woman he loved having been proved to be false—having discovered that his worshipped idol was of clay—the idea of quitting again his native shores, to carve out for himself a new fortune, seemed absurd.

His only hope now was that he might one day discover, by his own exertion, the clue to his identity, and find a happiness he could not find elsewhere, in the arms of his family.

So, for the present, he knew scarcely how to act.

He consulted Muddleby, telling him his story without reservation.

Mr. Muddleby gave his advice at once.

"If you're agreeable, sir," he said, "you'd better join my company. You can do a little acting, I've no doubt, and can make yourself generally useful. No one will suspect you to be here, and no one will recognize you in the quaint dresses you will wear."

Granby smiled.

"Well," he said, "I never thought I should turn actor for a livelihood. However, 'needs must when the devil drives,' and I accept your offer."

"You're a sensible young man," returned Muddleby; "and with a little tuition will, no doubt, make

a first-rate Romeo. Venetia does a juvenile Juliet; she's a prodigy, sir—quite a prodigy."

And thus, for the sake of house and food, Granby Saville, heir to the Castleton peerage, accepted employment with a strolling player.

That evening, in the parlour of the Prince of Wales, he sat reading the *Times*.

The weather had been bad, and many disasters had occurred.

And in a corner of the paper he read:

"FURTHER PARTICULARS AS TO THE WRECK OF THE OCEAN MAIL.—We find that among those drowned in this ill-fated vessel, on the night of — inst., were four passengers, who, at a late moment, booked themselves by her at Folkestone. The names of these passengers were Captain and Mrs. Walters, and maid-servant, and Mr. John Shadow. The bodies of the first three have been recovered; the body of the latter has disappeared."

Granby Saville dropped the paper from his hands, and gazed vacantly at the fire.

The future now was truly one great blank.

In spite of John Shadow's villainy, he had hoped that at the last moment, on a death-bed, at least, he would relent, and give the missing link in the chain of evidence.

Now that last hope was gone.

"By Heavens!" he cried, "what matters it now—gentleman or strolling player? We are all actors, says the poet. If so, who is our audience? Mine must be an audience of incarnate fiends, and the play I act in must be the devil's comedy!"

This, as he strode from the inn towards the booth, where, for a short future, at all events, his home was to be.

Then he entered, said good-night to Muddleby, took his way into the little corner assigned to him, and would soon have been asleep had he not been aroused by two voices—the one soft and melodious, plaintive and melancholy, as that of a dying angel; the other expressive of the intensity of human woe.

By this time the occupants of the booth were buried in sleep, and Granby Saville, creeping out of his corner, let himself out, and found the snow already lying thick on the ground.

Through this he waded to the spot whence the sounds proceeded, expecting to see a sad and strange sight, but never dreaming he was preparing for a meeting which would give an impress to his whole after-life.

Setting out from Leverton early in the evening an old man and a young woman, already spent with fatigue and want of proper nourishment, had found themselves at night-fall five miles from a town, and in the midst of a terrible snow-storm.

The evening had been tolerably clear, but gradually the clouds had trooped up over the sky and a steady storm of snow came down.

It came down steadily—uninterrupted.

It lay smooth and white over the country, levelling the grass and the paths and the tiny streams; it whirled in eddies round the trunks of the great trees; it stood three inches thick on the hedgerows and the broad branches; it dazzled, blinded, confused you everywhere.

The nearest route from Leverton to Burnley Bridge was across country.

Leaving the highroad on the right, and striking through the meadows, you saved at least three miles.

Along this road, then, came the wanderers, finding their way well while the sky was clear, but becoming bewildered and alarmed as the dark clouds gathered and the frozen rain descended.

The old man would have appeared, to a casual observer, the more tired of the two; but it was not so in reality.

The rosy cheeks and bright eyes of the young girl were produced, the one by the cool air, the other by excitement.

At length, when half the distance had been passed, the girl sat down.

"Dear father," she said, as she sank exhausted on a rough stile, "dear father, let us rest."

The snow was becoming every moment more dense.

The old man trembled.

"My dear child," he cried, "do try to proceed. There is danger here, in the bitter cold."

The girl smiled, a chill, ghastly smile.

"There is danger everywhere to us, father," she answered, in a voice which shook with the cold.

The old man groaned as he sat down beside her.

"Heaven was cruel in its very mercy," he murmured; "had I died when the Angel of Destruction was hovering over me, you would now have been proud and happy. And now! What are we now—what are you now?—outcast, homeless. Curse me, my child! I deserve it."

He bent his white head, and pressing his hands against his weary brow, wept bitter tears.

The girl rose up slowly.

It was evidently a painful effort to move.

Her legs were aching with constant walking, and cramped with repeated sittings in the cold.

He was still sobbing, and did not notice her.

She placed her hands gently on the old man's shoulder.

"Come, father," she said, "I am ready now."

He rose hastily.

"That is right, dear child," he answered; "that is right! let me end this weary journey. You will soon be out of danger—soon be out of danger."

He was always saying this; but she could not conceive what he meant.

So they trudged on again together—the girl's limbs trembling and tottering as she hurried on, until the lights of Burley Bridge were seen twinkling in the distance—dimly through the descending snow.

"I can walk no more, dear father," said Cicely Crowe, as she sank down near the lamp swung over the entrance of the booth; "let me lie here!"

"What, my child?" said Burnett Crowe.

There was no answer.

"Cicely, dear child, answer me!"

The repeated question brought no response.

It was at this moment that Granby Saville appeared on the scene.

"What is the matter?" he asked, kindly. "Is this lady ill?"

"Ill! yes, sir," cried Burnett Crowe, "she is ill! She is hungry and cold, and has fainted from exhaustion!"

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Granby Saville, as he knelt down and raised the girl's inanimate form; "she has indeed fainted. You, too, are weary, no doubt. Let me bear her to yonder inn."

As he spoke, he raised her in his arms, and moved towards the George Hotel.

The old man called to him to stop.

He paused.

"Stay, sir!—stay!" cried Burnett Crowe, in an agitated voice. "I feel quite dazed—quite bewildered. I have no money, sir—not a farthing! How am I to go to an hotel?"

"She must go there, at least for to-night," said Granby, again advancing. "I will see to everything, and we can come to an explanation in the morning."

Burnett Crowe made no answer.

How could he object?

With Cicely fainting from cold and hunger he could have begged in the streets, and he would not refuse the kindness of this young stranger.

Once having delivered her into the hands of the chamber-maid, Granby took leave of the old man.

"I will order you a supper," he said, "and will join you in the morning."

He then left, and moved away towards the booth.

"What have I done?" he asked himself, as he once more entered his corner of the wooden tenement. Have I aided two vagrants? or have I assisted two victims of injustice? Whoever she may be, that girl is as lovely as an angel, and carries Heaven's stamp of nobility in every feature."

(To be continued.)

EXTRAORDINARY VOYAGE OF A SAILOR'S CHEST.—A sailor's chest was recently lost in Ramsey Bay, and has actually been cast up not far from its owner's door in Whitehaven. It seems that a sailor named Thomas O'Nall, of Whitehaven, sailed in the Sisters of Fleetwood. On the 3rd inst. the Sisters lay wind-bound in Ramsey Bay, Isle of Man, when she was run into by a large Glasgow schooner, bound to Liverpool, and immediately afterwards sank. The crew got on board the Glasgow vessel, saving their lives, but nothing else, and were conveyed to Liverpool. O'Nall afterwards made his way home to Whitehaven, where he arrived on the 11th inst., and, strange to say, his chest, which had gone down with the Sisters, arrived the day after. It is said he was on the North Wall at the time, and saw it floating past the pier head. It was picked up by a man at Redness Point, and taken to the Custom House, and subsequently restored to its owner.

AN AFRICAN SPORTING KING.—The gun firing brought Mtsa out, prepared for a shooting trip, with his Wakungu leading, the pages carrying his rifle and ammunition, and a train of women behind. The first thing seen outside the palace-gate was a herd of cows, from which four were selected and shot, at fifty paces, by the king firing from his shoulder, amidst thunders of applause and hand-shakings of the elders. I never saw them dare touch the king's hand before. Then Mtsa, turning kindly to me, said, "Pray take a shot;" but I waived the offer off, saying he could kill better himself. Ambitious of a cut above cows, the king tried his hand at some herons perched on a tree, and, after five or six attempts, hit one in the eye. Hardly able to believe in his own skill, he stood petrified at first, and then ran madly to the fallen bird, crying

"Woh, woh, woh! can this be? is it true? Woh, woh!" He jumped in the air, and all his men and women shouted in concert with him. Then he rushes at me, takes both my hands—shakes, shakes; woh, woh! then runs to his women, then to his men; shakes them all, woh-wohing, but yet not shaking or wohing half enough for his satisfaction, for he is mad with joy at his own exploit. The bird is then sent immediately to his mother, whilst he retires to his palace, woh-wohing, and talking "ten to the dozen" all the way, and boasting of his prowess. "Now, Bana, tell me, do you not think if two such shots as you and I were opposed to an elephant, would he have any chance before us? I know I can shoot! I am certain of it now. You have often asked me to go hippopotamus-shooting with you, but I staved it off until I learnt the way to shoot. Now, however, I can shoot, and that remarkably well, too, I flatter myself. I will have at them, and both of us will go on the lake together."

FLOW OF WATER AT THE ARTESIAN WELL AT DONCASTER.—Mr. Dale, the waterworks engineer, states that the bore which is being made at the bottom of the pumping-shaft at Spring-head having penetrated a horizontal fissure 4 inches in depth, a large flow of water immediately rushed into the shaft; and notwithstanding the Jackson engine was pumping at the rate of 8,000,000 gallons in the 24 hours, the water in the shaft rose in ten minutes from 10 feet to 20 feet. Mr. Dale estimates that the present yield of water is at least 4,000,000 gallons in the 24 hours.

FAIR-WEATHER FRIEND.

BECAUSE I mourned to see thee fall
From where I mounted thee,
Because I did not find thee all
I feigned a friend should be;
Because things are not what they seem,
And this our world is full of dream,—
Because thou lovest sunny weather,
Am I to lose thee altogether?

I know harsh words have found their way,
Which I would fair recall;
And angry passions had their day,
But now—forget them all;
Now that I only ask to share
Thy presence, like some pleasant air,
Now that my gravest thoughts will bend
To thy light mind, fair-weather friend!

See! I am careful to stone
My spirit's voice to thine;
My talk shall be of mirth alone,
Of music, flowers and wine!
I will not breathe an earnest breath,
I will not think of life or death,
I will not dream of any end.

While thou art here, fair-weather friend!
Delusion brought me only woe;
I take thee as thou art;
Let thy gay verude overgrow
My deep and serious heart!
Let me enjoy thy laugh, and sit
Within the radiance of thy wit,
And lean where'er thy humours tend,
Taking fair weather from my friend.

Or, if I see my doom is traced
By fortune's stern pen,
And pain and sorrow must be faced,—
Well, thou canst leave me then;
And fear not lest some faint reproach
Should on thy happy hours encroach;
Nay, blessings on thy steps attend,
Where'er they turn, fair-weather friend!

MONCKTON MILNES.

WIFE FATTENING.—In the afternoon, as I heard from Muss that the wives of the king and princes were fattened to such an extent that they could not stand upright, I paid my respects to Wazezeru, the king's eldest brother—who, having been born before his father ascended his throne, did not come in the line of succession—with the hope of being able to see for myself the truth of the story. There was no mistake about it. On entering the hut I found the old man and his chief wife sitting side by side on a bench of earth strewn over with grass, and partitioned like stalls for sleeping apartments, whilst in front of them were placed numerous wooden pots of milk, and hanging from the pole that supported the beehive-shaped hut, a large collection of bows, six feet in length, whilst below them were tied an even larger collection of spears, intermixed with a goodly assortment of heavy-headed assegais. I was struck with no small surprise at the way he received me, as well as with the extraordinary dimensions, yet pleasing beauty, of the immoderately fat fair one, his wife. She could not rise; and so large were her arms that, be-

tween the joints, the flesh hung down like large, loose-stuffed puddings. Then in came their children, all models of the Abyssinian type of beauty, and as polite in their manners as thorough-bred gentlemen. They had heard of my picture-books from the king, and all wished to see them; while they no sooner did, to their infinite delight, especially when they recognized any of the animals, than the subject was turned by my inquiring what they did with so many milk-pots. This was easily explained by Wazezeru himself, who, pointing to his wife, said, "This is all the product of those pots: from early youth upwards we keep those pots to their mouths, as it is the fashion at court to have very fat wives."

ROSALIE DE CLAIRVILLE.

THE constable D'Armaignac, a man of mark and name, had long passed the flower of his age, without dreaming of linking his destiny to that of any of the fair dames who figured at the court of France, or won the admiration of the knights of Paris. In fact, he was no carpet-knight. He better loved the rude shock of arms, the charge of steel-clad cavaliers, the hand-to-hand combats of the stricken field, than the less dangerous encounters of the tournament; yet even these he preferred to the festivities of the palace and the banqueting-hall. He was a man of war, and rudely stamped with the roughest impress of his age. His helmet had worn away his once luxuriant curls, his face was minned by a thousand wrinkles, his complexion was bronzed and weather-beaten, his manner was harsh, his language brief and stern, and his whole time occupied either in battle, or in dreaming of strata-gems, campaigns, and sieges.

Yet it so chanced that in his "sere and yellow leaf" D'Armaignac conceived the idea of taking to himself a wife. To accomplish this object he addressed himself, not to the lovely and high-born damsel whose charms had penetrated even the iron hauberk that enclosed what he was pleased to term a heart, but to her father, an old companion in arms, and one as rude and unpolished as himself. Between the two the marriage was arranged, and the father of the beautiful Countess Rosalie de Clairville, in his dying moments, enjoined it on his daughter to accept the hand of D'Armaignac, under whose charge and roof he ordered her to remain, until such time as the old soldier chose to lead her to the nuptial altar. After thus making his last moments as disagreeable as possible, he kissed the cross-hilt of his sword, closed his eyes, ceased to breathe, and was laid with the ashes of his fathers, a race of iron-headed and iron-hearted gentlemen, all of whom had served their king, and many of whom had been to Palestine—a fashionable mode of stoning for a lifetime of carnage, rapine, and disorder.

So the Countess Rosalie was taken home to the feudal city of D'Armaignac, where all scandal was avoided by the perpetual presence of one of the severest of duennas, named Margarita, who had been imported from Spain expressly for the purpose. The countess was watched and guarded as strictly as if she had already become the property of the constable.

Now, it so happened that, without consulting her father, the Lady Rosalie had already fallen in love with a young gentleman of the court, whose name was Savoisy, a son of the chamberlain of King Charles VI. She had numerous other suitors, all of whom were dying of love; but Savoisy was the only one who could boast of enjoying her smiles.

D'Armaignac made, every day after dinner, a formal visit to the apartments of the countess, and there paid his addresses in good set phrases; but there was no heart in his wooing, and it was evident that he merely paid his devours in this manner for form's sake.

One day the aged wooer found the fair one reclining beneath the canopy of her reception-room, asleep. Still, he ventured to approach her, and kneeling, raised her lily hand to his rough and bearded lips.

"Dear Charles!" said the lovely girl, still dreaming on.

D'Armaignac started to his feet as if an asp had stung him. She had a lover, then—his name was on her lips—his image in her heart. Full of rage and jealousy, he sought out the duenna.

"Tell me," said he, seizing her rudely by the arm, "who is this Charles?"

"Who has told you about Charles, my lord?" asked the duenna, incautiously betraying her consciousness in her first terror.

"There is a lover, then!" growled D'Armaignac, hoarsely. "You have proved false to my interests and your pledges. He comes here in my absence; I know it. My wife—for she is mine to all intents—receives him. Speak out, or you shall feel my dagger's point. Tell me all—the days, the hours, the manner, the place of their meeting."

"I will tell you nothing," answered old Margarita.

boldly. "Kill me, I will never betray my sweet young mistress."

D'Armaignac half-drew his dagger from its sheath, but restored it to its scabbard, and, with a bitter curse, turned upon his heel and again sought the presence of Rosalie. She had awakened from her brief slumber, and was sitting in an easy attitude, resting on her gracefully rounded arm.

"Well, madam," said D'Armaignac, irefully, "if young lips babble in their sleep, old ears are apt to catch their meaning. Who is this Charles of whom you dream by day so fondly?"

"Charles!" cried the countess, turning pale.

"Ay, madam, you were not dreaming of Henri D'Armaignac, the only man of whom you have a right to think. Ha!" he added, "I will spare you the trouble of confession—it can be no other than Charles Savoisy, son of the chamberlain."

"No, no," said Rosalie, turning deadly pale, and trembling; "you have no ground for your suspicions, my lord—you are mistaken in your conjectures; I love not Charles de Savoisy; indeed, he never dared to address me."

"His horse has been seen saddled in my courtyard. How many times he has been here, secretly, I cannot tell: but by Heaven! you shall confess. Out with it, or worse shall betide you!"

"My lord! my lord!" cried Rosalie in agony; "spare me, pardon me!"

D'Armaignac checked himself in the heat of his passion.

"Go thy ways, mistress," said he; "I meant not to harm thee. But my rival had better look well to himself. Were he the proudest noble of the realm, who dares interpose between me and my affianced bride, I would slay him as I would a dog, at the foot of the throne itself."

With this chivalrous declaration, D'Armaignac went forth to interrogate the servants, and to see whether he could not obtain from their replies wherein to feed his mounting jealousy. He was terrible in his anger, and they all lived in a most wholesome dread of his wrath. None of them suspected the serious mischief which lay at the foundation of these astute and summary interrogatories; but from all they said, D'Armaignac came to the conclusion that none of them had been cognizant of or abetted any misdoing, except a dog which he had commissioned to watch the garden, and which, having surprised asleep in his kennel, he immediately strangled, by way of relieving his unbound passion. This fact led him to suppose that Rosalie's lover probably entered the castle through the garden, whence the only egress was by means of a postern that opened on the water-side. The Hotel D'Armaignac stood in the neighbourhood of the royal houses of St. Paul. One gate of this feudal dwelling opened on the Rue St. Antoine, and was fortified at every point. The walls on the river side were immensely strong, loopholed, and furnished with frowning turrets.

After much cogitation, the constable matured his scheme, and arranged his plan of action. He selected a number of his most devoted and skilful archers, and posted them in the towers that commanded the quay, with the strictest orders, on pain of their lives, to shoot down everybody except the countess who should seek to issue from the garden—but to spare the life of any one cavalier who should come in, day or night; taking care, however, to slay him as he passed out. The same precautions and orders were given at the issue on the Rue St. Antoine. The servants, even the chaplain, were forbidden to go out on pain of death. Then the duty of guarding the two flanks of the castle having been committed to a select body of men-at-arms, with orders to keep good watch in the lateral streets, the constable made sure of entrapping the favoured lover of the lady Rosalie, if he dared to penetrate the stronghold of his enemy.

The constable had business at Poissy, and was obliged to mount directly after dinner, knowing which, the poor countess had, on the preceding day, sent a note to Savoisy, inviting and urging him to visit her. While D'Armaignac was belting his castle round with guards, and laying snares of death for his rival, Rosalie was in an agony of terror.

She had held a conversation with Margarita, who assured her that D'Armaignac knew nothing of the stolen interviews which had frequently taken place between the lovers, and advise her to take into her confidence a laundress, who was employed about the castle, and who was renowned all over Paris, for the fertility of her invention and resources in matters of intrigue.

The three females deliberated together in the hope of contriving some method of warning Savoisy of his danger, and inducing him to remain at home. The laundress had a lover among the archers on guard, and she hoped through his favour to be able to go forth and obtain an interview with her lover. But although she went to the soldier and essayed all her blandishments, the man dreaded the anger of his

master more than that of his mistress, and positively refused to let the woman pass. The poor girl returned to the lady in despair at her ill-luck.

The countess soon discovered that she alone of all the household was permitted free egress from the castle. Of this she availed herself; but hardly had she gone a bowsprit from the gate, when four pages and two captains of the guard, closed up behind her, and she found they had orders not to quit her for a moment.

The unfortunate lady returned to her chamber, weeping.

"The fate of my lover is sealed!" said she. "Too well I know the constable's ferocity. Once within his power, Savoisy will never leave these walls alive. The cruel, ravenous sword of D'Armaignac will be stained with the best blood of his noble heart. I see but one way to save him; it is a terrible alternative—life for life; but between the two I will not hesitate."

Before condemning the countess for adopting a terrible alternative, we must remember that the age in which she lived was an age of blood. Human life was held of light account; deeds of violence were daily enacted; and even delicate women shuddered not at their recital or even their commission. Rosalie D'Clairville, beautiful, high-born, and refined as she was, in many respects, was not advanced beyond her period in her modes of thinking and acting.

"I shall save my lover," she said, drying her tears—"I shall save my lover, though at a terrible price."

With these words, she took her prayer-book, and issuing forth from the castle, moved slowly towards the sacred Church of St. Paul. Like most of the court ladies, the countess rarely missed this ceremony. There were always seen the most distinguished dames and cavaliers in the richest costumes, and the dark interior of the church glittered with diamonds, and resounded with the rustle of silks, the rattle of swords, and the clink of golden spurs. So the countess went forth in full pomp, accompanied by the two captains and a chosen guard of steel-clad men-at-arms.

Among the gallant knights who frequented the church, there were more than one who had sighed to possess the radiant charms of the countess. Among those who looked with much more frequency towards the ladies' seats than to the altar was one on whom the countess had often bestowed the charity of a kind look, because he was more humble and earnest in his homage than his fellows. This gentleman always stood apart, resting against the same pillar, stirring not, and appeared wrapped up in quiet contemplation of the beauteous lady. His pale face wore an expression of sweet melancholy. His countenance bore the imprint of good feeling, and he was evidently one of those who exist on ardent passion, and lose themselves deliciously in hopeless loves.

This gentleman, though his garments were well made, suitable and chaste, and though there was a certain air of taste in his appointments, seemed to the countess to be a poor knight, seeking distinction, and having no fortune but his cloak and sword. Thus, whether she suspected his secret poverty, or because she felt he loved her well, or because he was handsome, well-shaped, and dark-haired, she always wished him fame and fortune. Now she threw towards him some kindly glances, some looks of encouragement, which reached his heart, and sported with his young life like a princess accustomed to sport with more precious objects than a humble cavalier.

She had finally learned his history. He was a young and bannister knight, named Julian de Montespan, who had not inherited a single acre with his fief, and who had come to court in hopes to push his way by his good looks and his sword. He had seen the triumphant beauty of Rosalie displayed at church, and had fallen madly in love with the affianced bride of D'Armaignac.

This, then, was the young cavalier, on whom the countess had fixed her keen eyes.

On entering the church, the countess found poor Julian resting against his pillar, and watching for her coming, as the invalid watches for the sunshine of spring and the morning light. Then she turned her eyes away, and thought of going to the queen to require her assistance in her desperate extremity, but on her making a motion, one of the captains said to her, with a tone of the most profound respect:

"Madam, our orders are not to permit you to speak to man or woman, even to the queen your sovereign. Be sure that our lives are at stake in this affair."

"Is it not your duty to die?"

"And to obey," replied the soldier.

Then the countess resumed her usual place, and looking again at the poor knight, she saw that he was pale and thin, and that his face wore the impress of deep care.

"The less sorrow for his death!" she muttered, coldly. "He is half-dead already."

With this thought she cast another of her death-dealing glances at the knight, and the love that lighted up her fine eyes went to the very heart of the

suffering lover. The lady recognized, with a pleasure always fresh and new to the heart of a woman, the omnipotence of her magnificent glance, which the knight answered, in the same language, without speaking a word. And, in fact, the ruby colour which spread over his cheeks was more eloquent than the most musical periods of Demosthenes, or Cicero, and was quite as well understood. The countess, to make sure that this was not an accidental flushing, experimented on the virtue of her eyes, and was finally convinced that she had found a man willing to die bravely for her sake.

When the ceremony had ended, and the glittering throng were dismissed, the countess passed the pillar against which the cavalier was still leaning, and by another glance, testified her wish that he should follow her. To make sure of the proper interpretation and significance of this mute appeal, she looked back once more as if to wave him on.

She then perceived that, although he had left his place, he still seemed doubtful whether he should dare to follow her, but in obedience to this last signal, he mingled with the crowd and pursued her footsteps, though still at a respectful distance.

When she reached the gate of the castle, the countess halted, and making a sign to Julian, he was soon at her side. She then offered him her hand, and both found themselves within the fatal fortress.

"Come quick to my apartments," said she, "for I must speak to you."

The gentleman, not guessing the nature of this mystery, silently obeyed the request of the beautiful countess.

"Margarita," whispered the countess to the duenna, "I almost dread to tell him that the penalty of his blind and mute love is death, and that I am his betrayer."

"Think of Savoisy," answered the duenna, as she left the room.

When they were alone, the countess fell at his feet in an agony of tears.

"Hear me, gallant knight," said she; "I am unworthy of a thought from you. You will curse me when you know the crime I have committed in the bewilderment and selfishness of a mad passion. When you leave this fated castle, death will stare you in the face. The love I bear another has brought me to this desperate pass. Your death will save my lover's life. You go from hence to die."

"I loved you," replied Julian, crushing in his heart the dark despair caused by this terrible annunciation; "I loved you, Rosalie de Clairville, when I first set eyes upon your lovely face. I love you still as fondly as ever. I thank you for having used me as something wholly belonging to yourself. Other lovers offer gems and gold—I freely give you a gem beyond price—my life!"

"Julian!" cried the countess, springing to her feet, "were it not for Savoisy, how I could love you!"

"And am I to be sacrificed for Charles de Savoisy?" asked Julian, folding his arms.

"He is my lover," said the countess, sadly.

"You have been deceived," said Julian, earnestly; "you have been deceived. I pray you to believe the words of one who has not, if you speak sooth, many moments in this world. Charles de Savoisy has made a mock of your name among the idle gallants of the court. I heard him say he thanked D'Armaignac from the bottom of his heart for ridding him of an incumbrance. Nay, more, lady—he is about to be wedded to another."

"Savoisy false!" cried Rosalie, horror-stricken. "And you are to die to save a traitor!"

"My fate is, indeed, accomplished," said the knight. "My horoscope predicted I should die for the sake of a great lady. But by my patron saint, I swear that I will sell my life dearly. Still, I shall die content, since it was at the command of her I love best on earth. Perhaps poor Julian will live a little while in the memory of the Countess de Clairville."

"Julian!" cried the lady; "dear Julian, how could I ever have been blind to your noble character and knightly heart. How could I have passed by your silent homage, to be caught by the false glitter of Savoisy."

"Lady," said Julian, dashing a tear-drop from his cheek, "would you render death impossible, by making existence so dear? One kiss," and he imprinted a burning kiss upon her fevered lips. "It is the first," he said.

"And the last!" she cried.

"And now, come with me, Julian, and we will die together at the postern."

At this moment a step was heard upon the stair.

"Your life may yet be saved," said the countess.

"Quick, hide yourself behind that curtain."

"I will face the danger like a man," said Julian, drawing his sword.

"For my sake," cried the countess.

"For your sake then," said the knight, and passed behind the drapery.

Margarita entered the apartment.

"Courage, lady," said she; "I know not what has happened. But the guards are all withdrawn and marched off, the archers have left the tower, the gates are open."

"Let us fly then!" cried the countess, to Julian, as he advanced from his retreat. "Your life may yet be saved."

Silently and swiftly they sped together down the narrow, winding stairway that led from Rosalie's apartments to the garden. They crossed the open space swiftly, and darted through the postern. A single soldier was on duty there, but he offered no resistance, and saluted the countess respectfully as they passed. On, on they sped along the borders of the river. They reached the royal palace, a word from the countess was their passport to the queen's presence, where she threw herself upon her knees.

"Protection, gracious sovereign!" she exclaimed, "for a persecuted woman, whose life and happiness are both menaced. Release me from the chains of D'Armaignac, and suffer my hand and heart to go together."

"Rise, lady," said Isabella, kindly, "and fear nothing. D'Armaignac is powerless to-day. He has been detected in a conspiracy against his sovereign, and our royal consort has deprived him of his baton, and thrown him into prison—whence he only goes forth to die."

Some days afterwards, the nuptials of Julian de Montespan, and the Countess Rosalie de Clairville were solemnized with royal splendour, in the presence of the king and queen and all the nobles and ladies of the court. A royal manor was bestowed on Julian, and from that day forward no fonder or happier couple were known within the realms of France.

Charles de Savoisy, for whom Rosalie was ready to perish her own life, and that of another, involved in the conspiracy of D'Armaignac, shared his fall and fate. He was a double traitor, false to his lady and his sovereign, and as such met his doom. The development of his atrocity occurred in time to save a lovely lady of the court from uniting her fortunes to that of a recreant and perfidious knight.

F. A.

SCIENCE.

THE REFUSE OF SLATE.—A Frenchman has patented an invention for pulverizing the refuse of slate, and mixing with it some substance which produces a most durable material, and which answers the same purposes as some kinds of our most valuable stone.

VOLCANIC ACTION IN THE BRITISH ISLES.

I HAVE often urged that a far more profound examination of the writings of the Middle Ages in search of contemporary notices of natural phenomena than has yet been made, would not only be interesting for the history of science, but advantageous to some branches of science itself.

Some of the most important of these writings, as regards this subject, are still in manuscript, and totally unknown to men of science at the present day; but my impression is, that, among many other points of interest, we have abundant evidence in our old chronicles, published and unpublished, that volcanic agency was actively at work here at a much later period than is generally supposed.

An English scholar of the thirteenth century, Adam de Marisco, the friend of Robert Grossetête and of the great Simon de Montfort, has recorded a volcanic eruption in the Channel Islands in his time (about the middle of that century). I have just accidentally met with an account of some similar phenomena as having occurred on the northern borders of Wales at a much more recent period.

The following curious notice will be found in the *Annual Register* for 1778, p. 76 of the Chronicle:

"Holywell, Flintshire, Feb. 21.—The memory of man cannot recollect such quantities of snow to have fallen in these parts as last week; my house is three stories high, and I can hardly lay me down with security in the garret. Men, women, children, and cattle have found their tombs in the snow."

"The night before last, Moelfamme (a very high mountain in this neighbourhood) was heard to utter, as it were, deep groans: the adjacent hills trembled from their roots. The noise at eleven o'clock was like the sound of distant thunder, from the rolling of huge stones down a craggy precipice. At twelve there was a loud clap, and the vertex of the hill threw up in the same instant vast bodies of combustible matter; liquid fire rolled along the heaps of ruins; at the close of all nature seemed to make a grand effort, and rent one side of the mountain, which was solid stone, into an hiatus, whose breadth seems to be about two hundred yards; the summit of the hill tumbled into this vast opening, and the top appears level, which before was almost perpendicular. All is now

hushed; but in the places where the fire melted the snow the earth throws out the verdure of May. At Ruthin, as two persons were foolishly endeavouring to make their escape from the danger, they were buried in a drift; several made their escape from St. Asaph into the sea, and fell victims to their timidity."

As this must have been published at least a year after the date of the occurrence to which it relates, in a very respectable publication, with, therefore, plenty of time to examine into its truth, I suppose it must be considered as an authentic account. I am not aware that it is a fact known to geologists, and for this reason I venture to ask a place for it in your columns.

If it be a fact, and so recent, it shows how many and much greater natural convulsions may have taken place during the Middle Ages and be now totally forgotten. None of the works on Wales which I have examined give any detailed account of Moel Famman, or Moel y Famman, and I am not aware if it has been examined carefully by geologists.—THOMAS WRIGHT.

CURIOS FACTS ABOUT WATER.

The extent to which water mingles with bodies apparently the most solid, is very wonderful. The glittering opal, which beauty wears as an ornament, is only flint and water. Of every twelve hundred tons of earth which a landholder has in his estate, four hundred are water. In every plaster-of-Paris statue which an Italian carries through our streets for sale, there is one pound of water to every four pounds of chalk.

The air we breathe contains five grains of water to each cubic foot of its bulk. The potatoes and the turnips which are boiled for our dinners, have, in their raw state, the one seventy-five per cent, the other ninety per cent. of water.

If a man, weighing ten stone were squeezed flat in an hydraulic press, seven and a half stone of water would run out, and only two and a half of dry residue remain. A man is, chemically speaking, forty-five pounds of carbon and nitrogen, diffused through five and a half pailfuls of water.

In plants we find water thus mingling no less wonderfully. A sun-flower evaporates one and a quarter pints of water a day, and a cabbage about the same quantity. A wheat-plant exhales, in a hundred and seventy-two days, about one hundred thousand grains of water. An acre of growing wheat, on this calculation, draws and passes out about ten tons of water per day. The sap of plants is the medium through which this mass of fluid is conveyed. It forms a delicate pump, up which the watery particles run with the rapidity of a swift stream. By the action of the sap, various properties may be communicated to the growing plant. Timber in France is, for instance, dyed by various colours being mixed with water, and poured over by the root of the tree. Dahlias are also coloured by a similar process.

SCOTCH RAILWAY CARRIAGES.—The Scotch railways are setting an example to the English railways by warming the carriages with hot water apparatus. The next move has been to have gas laid on. The tubes atop of the carriages are fixtures, the jet pipe being let in to the position of the old lamps, and the glass globes enlarged to obviate the effect of the heat. The reservoir or "gasometer," which is fitted up in an old third-class put on behind the train, is of a square form, with a large plate of zinc on top, and sides of caoutchouc, and appears, when inflated, very much the shape of a large organ-bellows. It is calculated to hold a supply that will last a train for five hours, and that at a cost of only fourteenpence.

THE TENDERS FOR THE THAMES EMBANKMENT.—The Metropolitan Board of Works has received the following tenders for the second portion of the Thames Embankment—namely, that part from Waterloo Bridge to the eastern end of the Inner Temple. The tenders were fourteen in number, as follows—Mr. George Furness, £241,500; Mr. Thomas Pearson, £264,000; Messrs. Hickerty and Baylis, £257,000; W. Webster and Co., £240,000; Messrs. A. W. Ritson and Co., £229,000; Mr. T. Dockra, £260,000; Mr. J. Diggle, £229,400; Messrs. Rogers, Doon and Co., £238,500; Mr. W. Dettrick, £222,853; Mr. W. Tatam, £264,000; Messrs. W. McCormack and Co., £240,656; Messrs. T. Brassey and Co., £238,500; W. Moxon and Co., £243,195; and Mr. W. Lavers, £239,800. The board resolved itself into a committee to consider the tenders, and when the sitting was resumed, a report was brought up by Mr. D'Ifangor, recommending that the tender of Mr. Ritson should be accepted, subject to the usual inquiries. This was seconded by Mr. Legge, and carried *enam. con.*

ALLEGED POISONING BY STRYCHNINE.—A crime similar to that committed by the notorious Palmer is the subject of judicial investigation in Paris. A physician insured the life of his wife for 500,000 francs

£20,000), and shortly after the payment of the first premium the young woman died. The suddenness of the death and the large amount for which the life was insured created suspicion in the minds of the directors of the insurance company, and they determined to make the case known to the highest law authority. An investigation was commenced under the direction of the Imperial Attorney-General, in consequence of which the physician was arrested and committed to the prison of Mazas.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

BATH CHEESE.—To one gallon of new milk add two quarts of cold spring water, rennet sufficient to turn it (not hard); take it gently out with the skimming dish, and lay it in the vat until full; put a weight upon it, and apply dry cloths for a day or two when turned out on a plate with another over it, and turned occasionally. They are ready in about a fortnight.

SIMPLE MODE OF PURIFYING WATER.—It is not so generally known as it ought to be, that pounded alum possesses the property of purifying water. A table-spoonful of pulverised alum sprinkled into a hogshead of water (the water stirred at the same time) will, after a few hours, by precipitating to the bottom the impure particles, so purify it, that it will be found to possess nearly all the freshness and clearness of the finest spring water. A pailful, containing four gallons, may be purified by a single tea-spoonful of the alum.

STATISTICS.

THERE were entered through the gates of Paris during the year 1862, 162,556 kilos. of pies and trifles, 2,971,556 of cheese, 24,595,856. worth of butter, 12,160,828. of eggs, and 2,799,056. worth of salt.

THE LITERARY PROFESSIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.—According to the census of 1851 there were 1,504 male and 109 female "authors, editors, and writers" in England and Wales. The census returns for 1861 revealed but a very slight increase—namely, 1,528 male and 145 female "authors, editors, and writers." Thus male authorship, as a distinct profession, appears to be stationary, while the only augmentation of the literary profession is due to the introduction of an increased number of ladies into its ranks.

INSANE PAUPERS.—A Parliamentary statement has been published of the number of insane paupers chargeable to the poor-rates on the 1st day of January, 1863. Returns were received from 600 unions and single parishes under boards of guardians. There were 1,142,624 paupers in the receipt of relief, of which 36,158 were insane, 15,126 of this number being classified as idiots. Thus 3·17 per cent. of the pauperism, on the 1st of January last, is ascribable to insanity; the lunatics being 2·02 per cent., and the idiots 1·15 per cent. In regard to the sexes, 15,790 were males, and 20,060 females. They reside as follows:—19,127 in county or borough lunatic asylums; 1,418 in registered hospitals or in licensed houses; 9,208 in union or parish workhouses; 273 in lodgings, or boarded out; 5,432 residing with relatives.

THE COST OF THE AMERICAN WAR.—During this Abolition war at least 100,000 men have been killed, 400,000 have been disabled for life; thus half a million have been subjected to death, wounds, and to sickness worse than wounds in the armies on both sides. What amount of human misery has occurred beyond and behind the armies we shall not now inquire. The amount of property destroyed during the war may be roughly estimated at 500,000,000 dollars. The injury inflicted upon our commerce and carrying trade may be stated at 100,000,000 dollars. This is rather under than above the mark, for the rebel Maffie asserts that he alone has destroyed 11,000,000 dollars worth of ships and cargoes, and Sommes has certainly destroyed much more. The war debt of the North and South amount to about 5,000,000,000 dollars. If the war ends by the abolition of slavery, we shall have to keep a standing army of a hundred thousand men, and support two or three millions of indigent negroes for several years. But we will leave that probability out of account, and will also refrain from estimating the millions and billions of dollars which the now impeded industry of this country would have produced had not the Abolitionists caused this war. We wish to confine ourselves to facts and figures of indisputable authenticity. And what do these facts and figures show? Estimating the white population of the United States in 1860 at 26,000,000—and this is within a few hundreds of the official figures—we find that the Abolitionists have been instrumental in causing the death of one man out of every 260 people, and the crippling and

otherwise disabling of one man out of every 52 people. Also that the Abolitionists have caused the destruction of property valued at 600,000,000 dollars, and a war expenditure of about 5,000,000,000 dollars. If these are things to be proud of, let the Abolitionists hold a perpetual jubilee.

LUCIFER MATCHES.—At a lecture recently delivered by Dr. Proctor, of York, before the York Institute, the lecturer gave the following useful information about lucifer matches: Messrs. Dixon, Newton, and Heath, have a stock of timber of the value generally of from £1,000 to £10,000. They produce yearly 2,160,000,000 matches. Reckoning the length of each match at 24 in., they would exceed the circumference of the globe. It is estimated that 12,000 to 15,000 gross of boxes of matches are produced weekly in London alone. The yearly consumption of phosphorus in this country for the manufacture of matches is estimated at six tons, which, at 2s. 6d. per lb., represents £1,680. Our daily consumption of matches is considered to be 250,000,000, or more than eight matches a day for every individual in the kingdom. But the great seat of match-making is in Austria. For example, M. Pollak, at Vienna, and M. Furt, in Bohemia, consume together about twenty tons of phosphorus annually, and employ about 6,000 persons. This quantity of phosphorus is sufficient to produce the amazing number of 44,800,000,000 matches. The cost at which boxes and matches are made is equally startling. M. Furt sells his cheapest boxes at 1d. per dozen, each containing 80 matches. Harrop, a Prussian, sells his plain boxes at 2d. per 100, and 1,400 splints for 4d.; and De Mayo, of Moravia, sells a case of fifty boxes, each containing 100 lucifers for 4d.

A. COLONIAL HERO.

Two shepherds were in charge of one of the flocks of Mr. John Hassell, at a remote station, in West Australia. There was no other station within 20 miles of them.

One afternoon, some time ago, one of these men while occupied in his hut, which was only composed of stakes and rushes, fancied he heard a groan at a little distance. Going outside he again heard the sound of low moaning, and soon discovered his companion, Charles Storey, lying insensible in a brake, and covered with innumerable spear wounds. Carrying him on his back to the hut, he laid him on his kangaroo-skin rug, washed and probed his wounds, succeeded in extracting the barb of a spear which was buried in his side, and ultimately restored him to consciousness.

It turned out that Storey had been attacked by a band of natives, who wished to seize the sheep. This was admitted by the native witnesses at the trial of one of the party for the murder of Storey, who eventually died of his wounds. The two unfortunate men remained awake all night; one in extreme pain, the other carefully attending upon him.

Next morning the natives surrounded the hut, and began throwing spears, which completely passed through both sides of it. Finding that they would be murdered, Edward Ladbury, the witness, who told the tale in simple, unvarnished terms, took his only weapons, his pocket-knife and bill-hook, and boldly saluted. He had covered the bill-hook with his coat, so as only to display the handle which the natives took to be a pistol. He threatened to fire upon them unless they withdrew, and after some deliberation they suddenly retired.

All that day the men remained in fear of their return. During the next night Storey said he felt better, and they resolved to endeavour to make their escape to Mr. Hassell's next station, 20 miles distant. At 2 o'clock in the morning they stole out of the hut. Edward Ladbury was laden with their bedding and effects, and Storey clung to his arm. After crawling about 150 yards, the wounded man said he could go no further, and urged Ladbury to leave him to his fate, and save himself.

It appeared to be almost impossible to rescue Storey, but Ladbury determined not to leave him to certain death. He hurried forward with his load and deposited it a quarter of a mile off, then returned for his comrade, hoisted him on to his back, and carried him on to the same spot, where he exchanged him for their personal effects (the sole property of these poor fellows), which he again carried a quarter of a mile further. Then he returned for his friend, and thus they journeyed, one nearly dead of his wounds, and the other exhausted with his exertions, for a distance of seven miles, when they reached a spring of water. Here they remained a while, scarcely able to crawl any further.

Ladbury could no longer carry Storey, but he managed to drag him along.

After a miserable journey of two days and a night they reached Mr. Hassell's station at Jerrymungup, both of them nearly dead.

The wounded man, after necessary rest, was sent forward in a car to the hospital at Albany, where his sufferings were terminated by death.

Few men have better deserved the Victoria cross than this humble shepherd, Edward Ladbury. What struck us most forcibly about the matter was that his conduct elicited not a single comment or remark from either court, counsel, or jury. From which we are inclined to infer that such acts are far from singular or uncommon in this country. For our own part, we feel it to be only one degree lower than a crime to allow such an instance of generous self-devotion to pass without the tribute of applause; and although in this, as in most other cases, virtue is likely to be its own reward, Edward Ladbury may return to his hard life with the consciousness that he has nobly earned the sympathy and approbation of his fellow-colonists.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jesuit," "The Prelate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER LIV.

WHEN Jane and her lover met, the countenance of the former, although very pale, was calm, and her eyes were tearless. She had made up her mind to the sacrifice which honour and pride alike demanded, and she resolved that no weakness should rob it of its merits. Harry, on the contrary, was vacillating and disturbed—the prospect of losing her had rekindled his slumbering passion; and he thought, as she entered the room, that he had never seen her look more beautiful.

"Harry!" she said, extending her hand to him, "this is wise—is kind! It is better for both of us that the parting pang should be as brief as possible! Take back the vow," she added—"the only one my heart will ever listen to—for it is registered too deeply there for time or absence to efface it!"

"Part!" faltered her lover—who, although he had come to the conclusion that marriage with the daughter of a pardoned convict was impossible—ridiculous—felt secretly piqued that the decision should have come from her lips. "Ah, Jane, you have never loved me!" he exclaimed.

"Not loved you!" replied the poor girl, bursting into tears—for the accusation at such a moment was as unkind as unmerited. "Harry, you do not believe what you are saying! With all my pride—and I was proud once—I loved you despite your indifference—struggled against the painful conviction that your affections had changed towards me!"

"By heavens, you wrong me!" exclaimed the young man; "my heart has never changed! True, I have been dissipated—indulged in the pleasures of the world—yielded to the temptations which beset those of my rank and expectations—have been guilty of more follies than even you accuse me of; but even when tossed upon the wildest sea of passion, one beacon rose above its clouds and storms to guide me back to virtue. Your love, Jane—your true love!"

"Bless you, Harry!" said the excited girl; "bless you for those words. My heart will treasure them in many a lonely hour. I feel—I know," she continued, "that, after the discovery which has taken place, our union is impossible!"

This was the moment for a true and generous nature to have combated the resolution of a self-sacrificing spirit—for showing itself superior to the prejudices and opinions of the world—for proclaiming that the infamy of the parent enhances rather than dims the virtue of the child; but such, unhappily, was not the spirit of Harry Sinclair. He remained silent.

"You will soon forget me," continued Jane—and the very calmness with which she pronounced the words proved how deep was the pang they must have cost her; "the world has so many pleasures and pursuits for those of your sex. But if at times the memory of me should return, think of me kindly, and rest assured that none will breathe more fervent prayers for your happiness than I shall—even when your love has blessed another!"

"Jane!" exclaimed the young man, deeply moved, "it is not thus that we must part. Have I no feelings to wound—no heart to render desolate?"

He drew her towards him, and the head of the weeping girl, like a flower overcharged with dew, sank upon his shoulder, and rested there with the innocent confidence of childhood.

"Jane!" he whispered, in a voice thick with the emotions which inflamed and distracted him, "I cannot part with you! My heart is so entwined with yours, it would be death to sever them."

A deep-drawn sigh, sweet as the zephyr's when laden with the perfume of a southern sky, was the only response.

"What to us are the prejudices and opinions of

mankind? We are not born to be its slaves. Let the world frown upon our union—if happiness exists in our own hearts, we can dispense with its smiles!"

The sportive child who, in its moments of recreation, has made a playmate of some venomous serpent, was not more ignorant of its danger than the innocent Jane: she saw not the poison lurking beneath the honey of his words.

"And could you for me," she said, "brave the curse of the world?"

The dissimbler replied to her by a kiss.

"The anger of your family?"

"They would consider it a youthful folly!" answered Harry, surprised at the easy conquest which he imagined he had achieved; "and after all," he added, "it is but a prejudice: the heart which love hath united in its rosy letters need no other bond."

Then, and then only, was it that the pure and high-minded girl fully understood him. The snow-wreath melted by the rays of the sun, sinks not from the mountain's crest, to which in its icy purity it clung, more suddenly than Jane started from the bosom of the speaker.

"I have not understood your meaning, Harry," she exclaimed; "if you have any love remaining for me—any pity or honour in your breast—say that I have not understood you, and I will bless you!"

"Jane—dear Jane!"

Harry would have approached her, but she started back, her eyes flashing with the indignant fires of insulted virtue, and her proud lip curled in scorn; yet so pale and marble-like were her features, that she resembled an animated statue more than a living being.

"Thank you!" she said, in a tone of freezing coldness; "thank you, Harry!"

"Thank me?" repeated the young man.

"Yes; for showing me the loathsome thing I loved—for letting fall the mask which veiled the demon! Fool that I was to take the hollow, painted idol for a god! The illusion past, I find that I have worshipped a thing of clay!"

"You wrong me, Jane—by heavens you wrong me!" interrupted the young man. "Had you been poor, I still would have made you my wife—anything but the daughter of a convicted felon."

"And what, then, is he?" demanded the outraged girl, "who robs a confiding woman of that which is the crown and ornament of life? Is he less a felon, because the law assigns no punishment? I could have resigned you, Harry, though my heart was breaking with the effort, have bidden you seek happiness with another, but now words would not tempt me to become your wife, and rest assured," she added, with a look of virtuous pride, "that I shall never be your mistress."

"You judge me too severely, Jane!" answered Harry Sinclair, who began to feel not remorse, but shame, at the unworthy part he had acted.

Jane would not listen to him, but with an imperious gesture waved him from the room.

"Leave me," she said; "and if it will gratify your vanity, bear with you the avowal that you have inflicted a deeper wound upon my heart than time can ever heal, that you have destroyed my confidence in all that bears the name of love."

Still he would have urged, but the convict's daughter no longer felt the degradation of her father's crime; virtue, she felt, in such a presence, rendered her immeasurably his superior.

"Begone!" she said.

Harry Sinclair looked surprised, and bit his lips in bitter mortification, at the tone in which the words were spoken.

"Ay, look upon me!" she continued; "I can meet your glance without a blush. You have given me an arm to conquer my woman's weakness!"

"And what arm can conquer love?—for not ten minutes since you confessed you loved me!" confidently observed her former lover.

"Scorn! which, like the knife of the skillful surgeon, cuts beyond the wound, to make the cure complete. Fear not," she added, with withering contempt; "my heart will neither break nor bend 'neath the conviction that the last words of love have passed between us."

Abashed and mortified, as well as stung by the words and pride of one whom he expected to find humble and subdued, the seducer left the room.

Harry Sinclair fancied that, where women were concerned, he knew the world: the fool—he was acquainted only with its shadow.

No sooner was Jane left to herself, than, like a lute whose delicate chords have been unstrung, her firmness suddenly gave way, and she sank, weak and exhausted, upon a seat.

"And I have loved him," she murmured, "with the frankness, the deep passion of the heart's first love! And this is my recompense! I could have borne insult and humiliation from any lips but his. Man is doubly base when he inflicts a wound with the

weapon affection has armed him with! He never loved," she added, after a pause; "for love is no selfish passion, to seek for happiness in the misery and degradation of the thing it loves. I have mistaken the tinsel of his heart and mind for gold—pure gold and now must pay the penalty for trusting to a counterfeit!"

Mary entered the room; the affectionate girl was all smiles and gladness. She had heard of Harry's visit, and doubted not but that he came to assure her sister of his unchanged truth—to urge, as Charles had done, an immediate marriage—to declare that the opinions of the world weighed but as a feather in the scale against her virtues.

"In tears!" she said, in a tone of deepest sympathy.

"Have you not seen him?"

"Seen who?" said the unhappy Jane.

"Harry—Harry Sinclair."

"Her sister shuddered visibly at the name.

"Heavens!" continued her sister, throwing her arms around the agitated girl; "tell me what has happened. You cannot surely have suffered a false pride to interpose between you and happiness?"

"Mary—dear Mary—you do not know him. Here, let me hide my blushes in your arms, and do not look at me while I speak—he would have made me a degraded thing, unworthy of your love—have dragged me down to the abyss of shame—have made me his mistress!" she added, with a convulsive effort. "You, who know how I have loved, can judge what I feel!"

"Harry—Harry Sinclair would have done this?"

"Ay, when I came with a broken heart to bid him farewell in kindness—to release him from his engagement, and tell him to love another—to utter my prayers for his happiness—he breathed the words into my ear it would have been pollution to have listened to!"

Again poor Mary's happiness was clouded—for so perfect was the love between them, that if one suffered, the other shared her sorrows.

In the course of the morning Sir Cuthbert Sinclair called. Jane at first refused to see him, but he repeated his request with such earnestness, that, by the advice of her sister and Lady Briancourt, she at last consented.

The baronet, whose long residence in the East had eradicated from his mind many of the prejudices both of rank and country, had been particularly struck, not only with the beauty, but the simple, unaffected character of his nephew's intended wife; he looked forward to the time with pleasure when she would be to him as a child. He had weighed over in his mind the discovery of the preceding night, and had come to the resolution that no opposition from him should prevent the marriage taking place.

It was to announce this generous decision, to restore peace, as he hoped, to a virtuous, suffering girl—that he sought the interview. He was greatly shocked, when Jane entered the room, at the alteration in her appearance which a few short hours had made.

With a benevolent smile, he took her hand, and touched her forehead with his lips.

"And so you did not wish to see me?" he said. "I know all that you must have suffered from the scene of last night, can imagine your doubts and feelings; but all men," he added, "have not hearts of clay, and I am come to prove that I am one of the exceptions."

Jane looked for an instant in his face, and then burst into a flood of tears: the voice of kindness had touched her.

"This excitement," continued the old man, "is natural, and however I may regret, I cannot blame it. It was arranged, I believe, that your marriage with Harry should take place as soon as he had obtained his degree? We must abridge the time. What say you to at once becoming my niece?"

For a few moments the astonished and grateful girl felt too deeply the noble, generous conduct of Sir Cuthbert to reply: she could only weep.

"Good, generous man!" she sobbed at last. "I cannot speak my gratitude, my thanks are in my tears; but never, never can I become the wife of Harry Sinclair!"

Sir Cuthbert looked surprised at the very decided tone in which the last words were pronounced.

"Jane," he said, "you must not suffer a morbid sensibility to destroy his happiness as well as yours. Your hesitation does honour to your delicacy—although, in the present instance, I consider it misplaced. If I approve, what objection can you urge? Why fear the sneers of the world, if I respect and deem you worthy to become his wife?"

"He is unworthy of me!" replied the heart-broken girl. "I did not think to accuse him, but your unexampled generosity has wrung the secret from me. I saw Harry a few hours since."

"Well?"

"I released him from his engagement—for I felt

that I had no right to bring shame to the home of an honourable man. I felt what was due to his name and feelings."

"And how did he repay such nobleness?" inquired the baronet.

"By outraging mine—by offering me the deepest insult a woman can receive; at such an hour, too, when my heart was almost broken! He proposed that, since it was no longer possible for me to become his wife, I should consent to be his—. Spare me the word," she added, with a glow of shame; "I cannot speak it."

For some moments Sir Cuthbert Sinclair sat lost in thought as well as admiration of the young and beautiful girl before him, whose feelings had been so cruelly outraged.

"The heartless scoundrel!" he muttered, at last; "she is a hundred times too good for him! I cannot extenuate his conduct" he said, aloud; "it was cruel, heartless, unworthy of him, and still less worthy of you! But your position, my sweet girl, is a painful one. If Harry should repent, you may, in time, forgive him."

"I have forgiven him already!" was the unaffected reply.

"And will reflect upon what I have said?"

"The recollection," exclaimed the grateful girl, "can never be effaced from my memory. It will console me in many a lonely hour, that you did not think me unworthy of bearing your name!"

"And Harry?"

"Henceforward he must be a stranger to me, Sir Cuthbert!" answered Jane, in a tone in which wounded feelings and regret might be traced, but not one jot of weakness. "It will be difficult, I know, at first; but Heaven will strengthen me! The man who could pollute the ear of the woman he professes to love by proposing shame to her in the hour of sorrow, is unworthy to become her husband!"

Again thanking the baronet for the good opinion he had formed of her, and the generous line of conduct he had pursued, Jane left the room—pride and wounded delicacy sustaining her.

"That girl," thought Sir Cuthbert, as he quitted the house, "is worthy of a coronet. She would adorn any rank. How securely a husband might confide his honour to such keeping! And if I were only twenty or twenty-five years younger—but at sixty-three—pooh! ridiculous!"

During his ride home, the baronet came to the conclusion that sixty, after all, was not such a very advanced age—especially when such care had been taken of the constitution as he had taken of his.

CHAPTER LV.

Thou to whom the world unknown,
With all its shadowy shapes is shown;
Whose eyes appalled the unreal scene,
Whilst fancy hits the veil between;

Ah, fear—ah, frantic fear—

I see—I see thee near!

We must now request our reader to accompany us once more to the neighbourhood of Lexden—the scene where our tale commences.

It was a bright, clear, frosty night, and Bandy-legged Jem, the postilion of the Briancourt Arms, who had been with his horses to Colchester, was returning over the heath.

Not having the chaise with him, he resolved—as the family were absent—to take the road through the park; it would save him three miles—no slight consideration to a man of his years, for time had begun to tell upon his iron frame. He stuck to the chimney-corner more closely than he used to do; and when the weather was unfavourable, frequently resigned his seat to the next postboy; added to which, he had been a careful man, and could do without work.

"I wonder," he said, for he had a habit of speaking his thoughts aloud, "whether I shall live to see the old manor-house inhabited again? A curse in my opinion, has been on it ever since poor Miss Clara died! Well—well! her mother disappeared, no one knew where! Sir Charles is buried in a foreign land, and the welp of a grandson of that old rascal, Quirk, hasn't the spirit to keep the old place open again!"

Jem was no less tenacious in his dislikes than in his recollections. He had never forgiven the lawyer for the allusion he had made to his malformation.

About three hundred yards from the front of the house, where the above soliloquy had taken place, in a clump of yew-trees, which were supposed to be the finest in the county, stood the mausoleum of the Briancourt family. It had been erected by Sir Christopher Wren, in the reign of Charles I., on the site of a more ancient building, and bore all the characteristics of his style and times. The church stood at some distance from the mausoleum, the carriage-road passing directly between them.

Although the postboy was anything but superstitious, he had heard in his youth so many tales respecting the family whose ashes reposed there, that he had

a certain respect for the traditions—a sort of half-way opinion between credulity and scepticism.

We must also add, that the former feeling prevailed much more strongly at night, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the place.

As he approached the spot, Jem began to whistle a low, plaintive air. Perhaps it was for company—perhaps, as the poet suggests, for want of thought.

Suddenly the old man reined in his horses, and sat with his eyes fixed upon the building, respecting which so many strange stories were told.

The door of the vault was open, and, by the strong light of torches or a fire inside, he could perceive several dark, shadowy forms passing in and out.

"God protect me!" muttered Jem in pious horror. "What can this mean? Can the tales I used to laugh at be true? It can't be imagination!" he added, raising his hand to his eyes, and using it to concentrate his sight, "and I ain't drunk! I only had a pint of rum at the Three Cups, and two glasses of gin-and-water at the George. No—no, I am sober enough!"

After some consideration, the old man dismounted, and fastened his horses to a bough of the tree beneath which, for the last ten minutes, he had been contemplating the extraordinary appearance of the mausoleum.

"I've a great mind to go!" he said; "whatever they are they can't hurt me! I have never done anything particularly bad, and as for a mistake in a mile or so, or forgetting to give the horses their corn upon the road, Providence would never think it worth while to send express, like, to punish me for that!"

Having thus argued the question with himself, the postboy came to the conclusion that he might venture to approach a little nearer to the spot, and discover, if possible, who the intruders were, and their purpose. If thieves, who had forced an entrance for the sake of plundering the leaden coffins—and Jem had heard of such things—he was prepared to meet them; for he was armed with his heavy whip, which, being loaded at the end, was a dangerous weapon in his hands. If beings of an unearthly character, he could easily retreat, and, once on horseback, the old man fancied himself capable of riding a race with the Prince of Darkness himself.

The scene in the interior of the mausoleum might have startled the nerves of a much more valiant person than Jem. Upon a set of tresses in the centre of the vault stood an open coffin, the tenant of which had long since departed from this world of care and trouble; and yet sufficient remained to enable those who had known him in life to identify the remains.

At the head of the coffin stood a venerable-looking man, who had all the appearance of a clergyman. His lips moved, as if in prayer; but at the respectful distance which he thought it prudent to keep, the postboy could not catch a word he uttered.

"Well!" he said, as he gazed with terror on the group before him, "if the Evil Spirit hasn't taken the likeness of the rector! Such a good man, too! Curse his impudence!"

As if his Satanic majesty had ever been renowned for his modesty.

"There be another!" he said, as he caught the features of a tall, gentlemanly-looking man in the prime of life. "I could almost swear it was Dr. Bunn!"

A third party approached; and in the glare of the light Jem distinctly recognized the features of his old enemy, Quirk. At the sight of the lawyer, his doubts of its being an assembly of fiends vanished at once: he felt convinced it was; and, rushing from the spot, he mounted his horse, and galloped through the park as if the Evil One himself was following him.

We must now introduce our readers into the family vault of the Briancourts, and explain to them the mystery which has so terrified their old acquaintance, Jem.

The coffin which had been opened was that of the grandfather of the present baronet—Sir Charles Briancourt.

The party assembled in the mausoleum were really the rector, Dr. Bunn, Quirk, the lawyer, Sir Henry Smythe, a neighbouring magistrate, and one or two gentlemen to serve as witnesses to the proceedings they were about to take.

There was a strong odour of chloride of lime and perfumes in the vault. They had been burned by the medical men.

"I believe, gentlemen," observed Mr. Quirk, "you are perfectly satisfied that this is the body of Sir Charles Briancourt?"

The rector and Dr. Bunn both vouched for it.

"There can be no mistake on that point!"

"None!"

"Then, gentlemen," continued the lawyer, addressing one of Dr. Bunn's assistants, "you will at once proceed to the investigation!"

It is far from the purpose of our tale to pander to the morbid love of the terrible, by describing the secrets of the charnel-house too minutely: enough

that sufficient portions of the intestines and stomach were removed, and placed in leather bags constructed for such purposes, which bags the rector and the magistrate both sealed.

They had chosen night for the accomplishment of their painful duty, to avoid publicity. Little did they imagine the wild and improbable tale which by the following day would be circulated, not only in Colchester, but in the neighbouring villages.

As soon as their labours were concluded, the door of the vault was closed by the rector, who alone kept the keys, and the party entered the carriage of the baronet, which, having been drawn up on the other side of the building, had escaped the notice of the postboy.

"When is the analysis to take place?" inquired Mr. Quirk.

"To-morrow, at ten!" answered Dr. Bunn.

Sir Henry and the rest of the gentlemen who accompanied him expressed their intention of being present.

The lawyer thanked them, declaring that all he desired was the strictest justice and impartiality.

"Where the honour of one of the most distinguished families in the country," continued the baronet, "is concerned, we cannot be too particular!"

"Certainly not!"

"Pray, Mr. Quirk," inquired Dr. Bunn, "may I ask if Sir Phineas Braincourt is aware of these proceedings?"

"Not yet!" replied the old man, willing to spare his grandson the infamy of appearing in an investigation which he seriously believed might cost his grandson her life.

"Ought he not to be informed, think you?"

For an instant the lawyer was embarrassed for a reply.

"Why, the fact is—that—he—as it is impossible to say at present by whom the deed was perpetrated, I thought it advisable not to inform my grandson of the fatal circumstances which had come to my knowledge, I know what he would have felt!"

"And, considering your near connection with the family," observed the baronet, with that frankness which characterized every thought and action of his life, "it might have been as well if you had kept the knowledge to yourself!"

"Consider, my dear Sir Henry—the law would have regarded me as an accomplice!"

"Pooh!"

"Besides, my conscience—you forget that!"

"Indeed I do, Mr. Quirk!" replied the gentleman; "and it's my opinion that, if it never troubled you for a more serious fault, you would be a happy man! But, however," he added, "it is done now, and regret is useless: the affair has been brought before the magistrates—you have made your depositions, and justice must take its course."

With this observation the subject was dropped till the party arrived at Colchester.

When Bandy-legged Jem reached the Braincourt Arms, he leaped from his horse with an agility which astonished the helpers, and, without uttering a word, rushed into the kitchen, where several farmers and neighbours were waiting to catch the coach from London.

"Give me a glass of brandy!" he exclaimed.

"Brandy!" repeated his master, who, from his long services, respected the old man. "What is the matter, Jem? Thee lookst as pale as if thee hadst seen a ghost!"

"I have seen worse than that!" groaned the postboy. "I was an unbeliever till now, but I shall never be one again!"

"What has thee seen?"

The cry for brandy was repeated. Several flew to fetch it from the bar; for curiosity was aroused, and those who were best acquainted with Jem's peculiar temper, knew that it would be hopeless to expect he would relate what he had seen till the liquor was brought him.

The head waiter himself appeared with a tumbler of Jem's favourite beverage. As he sipped it down, he related the vision, as he termed it, which he had witnessed in the family burial-place of the Braincourt.

Although some were sceptical, none doubted that the man himself fully believed the tale he was narrating.

The consequence, as we said before, was that by the following morning it was reported, for miles around, that unearthly sights had been witnessed at the mausoleum near the manor-house.

(To be continued.)

KIDNAPPING.—It is gratifying to know the Government is not allowing the kidnapping of British subjects by the United States cruiser Kearsage in Cork to pass unnoticed. Several persons have been prosecuted against for infringing the law.



ELLA AND CLAUDE.

CHAPTER I.

Fathers have flinty hearts,
Old Play.

"Oh, that his father should be so stern and ungenerous!" exclaimed a young girl, as she sat in a mournful attitude before a decaying fire, in one of the splendid rooms of her uncle's mansion.

It was a spacious apartment, richly carpeted and furnished; and from the flowers which not only decorated the vases, but hung in gay festoons around the walls, it had evidently been adorned for some festive occasion.

The dress of the young lady, who sat so lonely and dejected in the midst of those gay garlands, was in keeping with the festive character of the scene. A robe of white gauze, falling in transparent folds over a rich under-dress of satin, gave that gossamer grace to her figure which airy drapery alone can impart. A wreath of white roses—mimic, it is true, but so exquisitely natural one could almost see the petals curl and tremble amidst the tresses they adorned—was bound around her brow, confining the light brown ringlets which fell unshorn and untutored, even to her waist. What a contrast her gauze dress and mournful attitude presented. That floral garland, and those sad, dark blue eyes, all swimming in tears!

The door opened very slowly and gently—so slowly that it seemed turning on invisible hinges, and a young man, wrapped in a dark travelling cloak, with his hat deeply shading his brows, stood on the threshold.

"Ella!" uttered he, in a low voice; and the young girl started as if touched with electric fire.

"Oh, Claude, Claude, is it you?" she cried, and the next moment, regardless of the roses she was crushing, the beautiful gauze folds she was disorder-

ing, she was weeping on his shoulder, half-enshrouded in the folds of that dark, heavy cloak.

"How pale you are, dear Claude," she at length exclaimed, "and how cold!" and drawing him gently towards the fire, she assisted him to unclasp his cloak; and then, stirring the dying embers till they glowed with cheering redness, she sat down by his side, and, taking his chilled hand in hers, gazed earnestly in her face.

"How beautiful you are to-night, Ella," said he; "and how adorned!" he added in a tone of bitterness.

"This is all mockery, nothing but mockery," cried she, pulling the roses from her hair, and casting them at her feet. "They dressed me for my birth-day ball, and I was compelled to submit. Uncle would have it so, and I could not help hoping he intended to make this a night of reconciliation and joy. Oh, that he were less kind to me, or less cruel to you. I want to hate him, and he will not let me."

"I have deserved punishment for folly and disobedience, sin, if they will have it so; but banishment from home, banishment from you, Ella, oh! it is hard. I am not a second Cain, that I should be driven, an alien, from my father's house."

And the youth rose up suddenly, and walked about the room, struggling with his wretchedness.

"Yes, I must go, never to return. In little more than an hour from this, I shall be wending my way, I know not, care not whither. Disowned, banished, threatened with malediction if I remain longer near the home I have disgraced, I care not what becomes of me. Fool, maniac that I have been, I might have

anticipated all this, I might have known that I had a Roman father to deal with. But, thoughtless of the past, reckless of the future, I have rushed on to ruin. Ella, my cousin, my sister, my more than sister, can I, must I part from you?"

"No, no, no," she cried, clinging to him as if her arms had power to shield him from the doom that hung over him, "you shall not go. Your father cannot mean it. He does not wish it. I will go to him this moment, and rousing him from his night-sleep, I will kneel, weep, pray before him, till he relent and forgive. How dares he think of sleep when he has made us both so wretched? Come with me, Claude! kneel and pray with me. He cannot resist our united prayers."

"It is in vain," he answered, a dark shadow gathering over his face; "I have already humbled myself in the dust before him, and he spurned me. Never again, even to my own father, will I degrade myself thus. I would meet banishment, poverty, suffering, even death itself, before I would expose myself a second time to such humiliation. Nay, Ella, put down that lamp; you cannot avert my doom."

But Ella would not hear. With the lamp glimmering in her hand, and her white silvery-looking robes flittering like the wings of a snowy bird, she flew rather than ran up the long winding stairs, that led to the chamber of Mr. Percy. In her excitement, she forgot to open the door softly, and it swung heavily on the hinges. Mr. Percy was not asleep. How could he sleep, when he had doomed his only son to banishment? No, he was the restless couch and the thorny pillow: but he was also the unconquerable will, the proud, unyielding temper. The decree had gone forth, and he would not change it, though his heart-strings should snap in the struggle.

Raising himself on his elbow, he gazed with a bewildered countenance on the youthful intruder. A strange apparition in the chamber of than stern, dark man. Rich curtains of crimson damask shaded the bed, and threw a kind of glow on the pale and haggard countenance of the occupant. His complexion looked still more sallow in contrast with the snowy-white of the pillow, and under the shadow of the sable hair, as yet only partially threaded with silver, hung over his temples. Ella threw herself on her knees by the bed-side, and burst into a passionate fit of weeping. His conscience told him her errand, and he spoke to her in a harsh, hurried tone:

"What is the meaning of this? I like not to be disturbed. I have tried to make you happy to-night. Go away, child, and let me sleep." Sleep! she could have said:

There's a voice in all the house
Cries, "Sleep no more—Macbeth has murdered sleep."

"Oh, uncle, forgive Claude and let him stay; I cannot see him go; I shall die of grief, if you cast him away from you. You cannot be in earnest, uncle; you are only trying him. Say no, and I will bless you on my knees, till the instant day of my existence."

"Do I look like a jesting man?" cried he, drawing away the hand she had grasped in the energy of speaking. "I am indeed in earnest, as that unhappy boy shall soon know to his cost."

"Oh, uncle, he has suffered enough already; you know he has. Had he committed murder, forgivany any crime, you might have disowned him; but—"

"Crime!" repeated the indignant father, sweeping back the curtain with one hand, and with the other pushing away the heavy locks from his brow, while his eyes flashed luridly. "Had he committed murder in the madness of passion, I could have forgiven him and kept him near my heart, though his hands were reddened with blood. Had he committed forgery in a moment of temptation, I could have forgiven even that. But to go against warning and command, to herd with a company of vile vagabonds, to follow them to their haunts of wickedness, to adopt their profession, to become one among them, heart and soul, to suffer his name, my name, the name of Percy, to be placarded in every corner of the street, for the vulgar to gaze upon, and the wise to sneer at; the author of such a disgrace never shall be forgiven. Away, and disturb me no more."

Ella rose from her knees. The tears seemed frozen in her heart. She had entered the chamber with a wrestling spirit—the spirit that spoke through Jacob, when he said unto the angel, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." Alas! she had no angel to contend with, but a proud, unconquerable man: a man whose family pride had received a deep and immediate wound. With a look of hopeless dejection, of sullen, passive endurance, she turned from that sleepless bed of down, and descended the winding stairs. She was no longer the bird, winging its upward flight. She was the snail, dragging itself wearily along. The spring of hope was gone, and a leaden weight held back her steps.

"I told you so," said Claude, turning of ashy pallor; "for, in spite of his assertion to the contrary, he

had cherished a secret hope from her intercession. "I told you, you would plead in vain."

Ella, overpowered by disappointment and sorrow, leaned in tearless anguish on the shoulder of Claude, who pressed her in silence to his breast. She felt that deadly sickness of soul which precedes the final separation from the object most loved on earth. They had been brought up under the same roof, protected by the same guardian; both were brotherless and sisterless; how could they help loving each other?

"Oh! that I were a boy!" she cried, "then I would go with you, Claude, preferring poverty and exile with you to all you leave behind. I would share all your trials: and heavy ones will they be, poor Claude! Whither will ye go? What will you do? But promise me, Claude, whatever you do, you will never go back to scenes my uncle so much abhors. He will yet pardon and recall you: I feel, I know, he will."

"No, Ella, there is no hope of that; but be assured, to whatever extremities I may be driven, I shall never resort to past scenes. If you ever hear of me again, it shall be with honourable mention. Whither I shall go, what I shall do, I know not. I shall just float along the tide of circumstances, and perchance the wanderer may find some green spot to rest upon. I do not fear want, for my father's son has not been sent away entirely destitute. I shall work out my own destiny, and something tell me, that in manhood, I shall redress the faults and follies of my youth. Ella, dear Ella, do not weep so bitterly! I am not worthy of such tears. In this moment, I feel all the madness of which I have been guilty. I do not wonder that my father disowns me. I deserve to be an outcast."

The clock struck one. Claude started, as if a knell tolled on his ear. It was the signal for his departure, for the vehicle that was to bear him away must even then be waiting at the hotel, where his trunks were already carried.

"You will write to me, Claude; wherever you may be, you will write and tell me of your welfare? Remember, it will be all I shall live for now."

"Yes, Ella, as soon as I find a home." His voice faltered with deep emotion. "One promise, Ella: be kind, be loving still to my father. Do not resent my banishment; and should nature resume its empire in his heart, and be remember with sorrow his alien son, then comfort him, Ella, for my sake. Tell him that I love him still, and that my life's struggle shall be to prove myself worthy of the name I bear. Farewell, Ella! sister, cousin, friend, dearest, a thousand times dearer, than all these precious names to my heart; but how dear, I never knew till this bitter moment."

Incapable of speaking, Ella lay sobbing in his arms. Stooping down, he kissed the pale cheek that rested almost unconsciously on his breast, while hot, scalding tears, that could no longer be repressed, gushed from his eyes. To leave the home of his father, the companion of his childhood, to go out into the cold world, friendless and alone, not knowing what ills he must endure, with what storms he must battle, with what enemies he must contend—and to feel, too, that all this was the consequence of his own disobedience and folly—it was a bitter thought.

With a desperate effort, he released himself from the clasp of those fair, clinging arms, placed her gently on the sofa, and rushed from the house. The faint light of the night-lamp in his father's chamber, glimmered through the window and streamed across his path. The unhappy youth paused. It seemed that all beyond that ray was darkness and desolation; and yet it threw a solitary gleam of brightness on the parting hour. It might be an omen of future forgiveness. Softened, melted into even womanly tenderness, and filled with remorse at the memory of his disobedience, he knelt on that illuminated spot, and bowed his head in penitence and humility, even as if he were prostrated at his father's feet.

"Father, Ella, farewell," he cried, and starting up, dashed the tears from his eyes, and became a wanderer from his native home.

CHAPTER II.

He was a faint, a venial fault,
That sires of higher state might pardon. *Anon.*

MR. PERCY had the three-fold aristocracy of birth, wealth, and talents. The very name of Percy had an ancestral sound, and breathed of noble blood. Called to sit in the high places of the land, and to act a conspicuous part in his country's capital, he had but little leisure to devote to his son, who was the object of his pride, even more than his affection. He was an only son, and consequently the future representative of his name and fame; and, as if Nature, in this instance, was determined to gratify, to the utmost, a father's pride, she had endowed the youth with her most splendid gifts. Of extraordinary personal beauty, brilliant talents, the most graceful and engaging manners, in the brightness of life's morning hours he gave promise of a glorious noon. At college, he was called the Admirable Chrichton, so wonderful was the

versatility of his talents, the ease with which he could master the most difficult and abstruse sciences.

Mr. Percy exulted in the reputation of his son, but he knew nothing of his heart, and during the long holidays, Claude, whose spirits often wildly effervesced, "sought out many inventions" to wing away the hours. One of his favourite amusements was to get up private theatricals, in which Ella and himself acted very distinguished parts.

Ella, however, sometimes objected to Claude's choice of characters, and, though he was rather despotic, he was obliged to submit to her caprice or judgment. He must not take the part of King Lear, as it made him look too old and crazy; he must not be Othello, for it would be too horrible to blacken and disfigure his beautiful face; but Romeo—the handsome, youthful, and impassioned Romeo—that was the character which, more than all others, she loved to see him perform. With his cap, shaded with long, white feathers, drooping over his classic brow, his dark-brown waving hair so romantically arranged, and his eyes beaming with all the poetry of love, nothing could be so graceful and beautiful as Claude.

Ella made bewitching little Juliet, but she often forgot her character in admiration of Claude; and, even in the vaults of the Capulets, when her eyes should have seemed sealed in everlasting slumber, the dark-blue orbs would furiously open to gaze upon her Romeo. Little did they think that these gala evenings of their youth were to change the whole colour of their destiny.

Once, when Claude was representing Macbeth in all his majesty, and the servants, dressed like witches, with long brooms, were dancing round a large marble basin, which was supposed to represent a boiling cauldron, where many an "eye of gnat and tongue of toad" were simmering and cooking; and Ella, with a regal-looking turban surmounting her childlike head, was peeping behind a long, green curtain—the door opened, and Mr. Percy entered. The ghost of Banquo, with his gory locks and blood-stained brow, rising up at the royal banquet, was not more appalling than this unexpected apparition. The crimson turban of Lady Macbeth plunged into the darkness of the curtain, the servants scampered away, dropping their brooms as they ran. Claude alone stood his ground, like a king, and confronted, with undaunted mien, his father's wrathful glance.

What a scene for the ultra-majestic statesman, who never deviated from the perpendicular line of formality in the most common affairs of life—whose household concerns were always conducted with the severest accuracy and the most rigid discipline—and who, above all, had the most sovereign contempt and aversion for theatrical exhibitions.

"What is the meaning of this vulgar revelry—this scene of tumult and chaos?" exclaimed he, in a voice like low thunder. "How dare you, young man, convert your father's hall into a scene of theatrical riot?"

The scene which followed was one in which passion and pride struggled for mastery; but pride at length prevailed. Mr. Percy felt that it was undignified to scold, and when his anger was somewhat abated, he condescended to reason with his son. Had he done it more calmly, more gently, he might have exercised more influence. But family pride, the idol he set up for his worship, Claude cared no more for than the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, with its legs of iron and its feet of clay. Mr. Percy commanded him never to enter the walls of a theatre—never again to turn the leaves of Shakespeare, or to have anything to do, with dramatic exhibitions, either public or private. He deemed this command sufficient, for the thought that his positive commands could be disobeyed never glanced into his mind. This folly had not been anticipated—therefore, not prohibited; but, once discovered and forbidden, he felt as if a flaming sword guarded the majesty of his law.

Unfortunately, however, the master-passion of Claude only gained strength from opposition. His love of the drama became a monomania, and, in spite of his stern father's prohibition, he not only visited the theatre, but frequented the greenroom, and became acquainted with some very dangerous and fascinating characters. One of these, who was about to take command of an itinerant company, having witnessed a specimen of Claude's astonishing dramatic talents, resolved to secure him as the new star of the season. It was not without much hesitation that young Claude consented to take so bold a step, but the tempter was eloquent, and his own misguided imagination was a more eloquent tempter still.

His father was absent on a long journey; but Ella, his sweet cousin Ella, should he leave her without confiding to her his secret expedition? Yes, it must be done; for, were she the confidant of his purpose, she would be the sharer of the parental anger, which he well knew would fall upon his head, but which he rashly dared to brave.

The sequel is already known.

The wrath of Mr. Percy, when he learned, through the public papers, that his son, his heir, a Percy, had come before the world as an actor, cannot be described.

When the young prodigal, weary of the false glitter of the artificial life which, in the distance, seemed so alluring, dreading reproach and wrath, because he knew he merited them, yet confident of ultimate forgiveness, returned to his father's house, it was only to be sent forth again in banishment and disgrace.

The magnificent ball, given on Ella's sixteenth birthday, was celebrated by Mr. Percy's orders, in contrast to Claude's degradation. Ella, hoping, believing all things, imagined that her uncle had prepared this brilliant festival, that he might restore his son to favour, without the embarrassment of a private reconciliation. Alas! she knew not the man.

Waked from his feverish dream of excitement, Claude now sees, by the cold, grey light of dawning reason, the rough realities of the future. Like our first parents driven from the garden of Eden, "all the world before him lay." But, had he taken Providence as his guide? In the sunshine of prosperity he had forgotten its guiding cloud, and its pillars of fire went not before him to illuminate the darkness of his destiny. And very dark that destiny now looked to him. He was so young and inexperienced—only nineteen—what could he do? He never once thought of resorting to the stage. His mind, by a powerful refection, was now as much repelled by that course of life as it had once been attracted by it. He loathed the very thought of it. Where should he go? Uncaring whether, he decided to direct his course northward. He had a college friend, who lived in the Lake District, and possibly, through him, he might learn of some employment—a private tutorship perhaps.

We will not follow thy young and deeply reflecting wanderer through all the windings of his way; but we will stop with him, at the foot of one of the heaven-ascending mountains, that cast their shadows far over the lower lands in this district and see who lies by that broken, over-turned carriage. Such a rough, precipitous, dizzy road—it is no wonder there should be runaway horses, broken bones and bruised limbs.

Claude had jumped from the stage-coach, incapable of such long inaction in his present restless and struggling mood, and was leaping down the craggy mountain path. The sight of a shattered vehicle, the groans of a man, who was lying partly under the fragments, arrested his step. The sufferer was an aged man, with hair of snowy whiteness, and features which, in repose must have expressed benevolence and benignity; but now they were distorted with pain, and, from his pallid complexion and ashy lips, it was evident he was sinking beneath the weight of his sufferings. Claude, taking from his pocket a drinking cup, ran to a clear spring, that gurgled within a few feet of the travelers. Beautiful springs there are welling at the foot of these great mountains! He bathed the forehead and lips of the aged sufferer, raising his head gently on his arm, and smoothing back the white locks, all soiled with dust.

The stranger, restored to consciousness, opened his eyes, and beholding a countenance so young, so beautiful, so compassionate, bending over him, he almost imagined an angel had been sent down to his relief. Leaning on his elbow, he endeavoured to rise, but fell back again with a deep groan. One of his limbs was broken, and it was evident he had received some dreadful internal injury. Claude felt that, alone, he could not assist the disabled stranger.

A cottage stood at a little distance, a small cabin, where the stage was accustomed to stop. His first thought was to run thither, and procure assistance; the next to await the coming of the stage, whose course he had anticipated, and which, in its thundering passage down the hill, might overlook the poor, helpless traveller, unless warned of his situation. He acted on this last thought, and, with the assistance of the other passengers, the stranger was removed to the cabin. Pitiable was the situation of the aged sufferer. He was unaccompanied by friends; it was impossible to procure a surgeon, without sending a great distance, in those lone mountain regions, and the house to which he was carried could scarcely furnish him the comforts wanting in health. How much more must he feel the destitution in his present helpless, suffering, almost dying condition!

Claude sat by the rude couch, on which he was placed, trying to cheer him by kind and encouraging words. He told him that a messenger had been despatched for a surgeon, and that he would remain with him till all danger was past.

"But the stage is already at the door," said the old man, feebly, "and you must depart. I cannot take advantage of your kindness to a stranger."

But Claude would not leave him. The stage-horn blew loud and musically, the passengers hurried to their seats, the driver vociferated that all was ready,

and still Claude held the old man's hand and refused to depart. The heart of the banished son yearned towards the venerable stranger. New feelings were awakened within him. It was the first time he had witnessed human suffering, and he knew not, till this moment, what a deep fountain of pity lay in the unexplored regions of his heart. But the angel had stepped into the pool, and the waters were troubled. Mr. Montague (such was the stranger's name) resisted no longer the generous sacrifice of Claude.

"Heaven bless you, my son!" was all he could utter.

Claude sighed. How sweet, yet mournful, sounded that name of parental endearment to his ear! He thought he had heard it for the last time, and it awoke ten thousand thrilling remembrances.

All night Claude watched by his bed-side, endeavouring to mitigate the excruciating pain that racked his frame almost to dissolution. The inmates of the cabin were kind but rough people, and Mr. Montague evidently shrank from their ministrations. The bed was hard, the pillow low, and the sheets, though of snowy whiteness, of exceedingly coarse linen. The wintry wind whistled round the walls, and no curtains protected the invalid from the blast. The windows were nothing but openings, closed by wooden shutters, which, occasionally loosening, flapped to and fro, with a mournful, creaking sound. There was nothing cheerful in the aspect of the room, but the bright, all-illuminating wood-blast, that rolled up the immense chimney, reflecting its glow on a sable figure that sat nodding on the hearth, on the pallid face and snowy locks of the aged.

Such was the apartment and scene in which the luxuriantly-bred and self-indulging Claude served his first apprenticeship at the couch of suffering. Often during the stillness of the night, he would start and tremble with awe, as the sufferer, in the extremity of his agony, would call upon his Saviour to help him, in the time of trouble.

"Forsake me not. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee—for thou wilt answer me."

It was the first time that Claude had heard the voice of prayer, save from the sacred desk. But when he listened to it as a formula proper for the Sabbath, and the Almighty thus addressed seemed very far off. There was something awful in being thus made to feel his presence in that lonely chamber—in being brought so very near Him by the prayer of faith, mingling with the groans of agony. His earthly father had cast him off. Had he indeed a Father in heaven, who would receive the returning prodigal?

CHAPTER III.

The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie,
For dear to me as life and light,
Was my sweet Highland Mary. *Burns*

LATE the next morning the surgeon arrived. The inflammation, caused by such protracted suffering, made it a very dangerous case, and for many days Mr. Montague lingered on the borders of the grave. Claude would have written to the friends of the sufferer, but his speechless lips could give no directions; and all that the young man could do was to watch by his couch, and await the issues of life and death.

At length the inflammation subsided, and the patient was pronounced out of immediate danger. Then Claude, at his request, wrote to Mr. Vane, his son-in-law, who resided with him, at a distance, several days' journey from the mountain-cabin. A week must elapse, at the shortest possible calculation, before any of his family could arrive. In the meantime, though helpless and suffering from his broken limb, he gradually revived, and seemed to derive much pleasure from the conversation of his youthful friend. Claude, with the ingenuousness of youth, told him all his history.

"Poor boy! poor boy!" cried Mr. Montague, moved even to tears; "so young and inexperienced! I will be a father to you; I have no son of my own; and you shall be the son of my adoption. I owe my life to your care, and am selfish enough to rejoice that Providence has opened a way in which I can show my gratitude, and pay, though but in a small degree, a debt so large. Oh, my dear boy, I will carry you to a happy home, where all is love, and peace, and joy. You shall have a sister, too, in my granddaughter—my sweet, sweet Mary. How happy she will be to have a companion whom she will love as a brother!"

Claude bent his head on the old man's hand, and a tear moistened the dry and feverish skin.

"Think me not ungrateful, sir, but I cannot eat the bread of dependence."

"Fear not; I will only put you in the way of earning an independent subsistence. You shall study law with Mr. Vane, if you like the profession. In

the meantime you can give my Mary lessons in something, French, drawing, or whatever you may know best, and thus make a compromise with pride. Devey me not, my son, for my heart clings to thee, and refuses to be separated from thee. I see the hand of Providence in this. Disowned by him who gave you birth, God has sent you to watch, with all a son's devotion, by my lonely pillow, and to be cherished in a bosom that feels for you already all a father's tenderness and love."

He opened his arms with a benign smile, and Claude felt as if he were indeed clasped to the bosom of a father. That night he wrote to Ella that he had found a home—a father; he had no longer a dark and aimless existence, but a future illuminated by hope and promise: she must no longer mourn for the banished Romeo; bright days were yet in store, when love and faith and constancy would meet their reward.

What a change was made in that lonesome cabin by the arrival of Mr. Montague's family! He was a rich West Indian planter, and had all the appliances of wealth and the refinements of luxury to grace his home. Downy beds and soft cushions were brought for the comfort of the invalid, as well as many delicacies.

Mr. Vane was a noble specimen of the English gentleman—his wife a fair, gentle, interesting-looking lady; but Mary, sweet Mary, how lovely she looked, clinging, like a fair garland, round the neck of her aged grandfather! How angelic the expression of her soft, dark eyes—how delicate the lines of her cheek! Not even the faintest tint of red was visible on that beauteous cheek: it seemed too pure, too holy for the breath of human passion to pass over it.

"Ah, dear grandfather!" she cried, smoothing away his long, silky hair, and kissing his pale forehead; "you should not have crossed the mountains alone; you know how hard I pleaded to bear you company!"

"These young arms could hardly have checked the fiery horse," cried he, fondly returning her affectionate caresses. "I believe I was wrong; but when we are very young or very old, we are apt to be too self-relying and independent. Had not my driver fallen sick, so that I had to leave him and trust to myself, this accident would not have overtaken me. But it's all right, and will prove a blessing to us all. It has given a dear young son to my old age, and a friend and brother to my gentle Mary."

Whilst this scene was taking place within the cabin, Claude was wandering in an adjacent plantation, whether he had gone, as it were upon leave, from the couch of Mr. Montague, who seemed inclined to fall asleep. Mary was immediately desired to go and look for him, and hastening to the place to which she had been directed, entered the wood in search of him to whom they all felt so much indebted. Claude was already thinking of returning to his charge at the cabin, when, just as he emerged from a closely intertwined part of the plantation, he came fully into the presence of Mary. He did not know her; but from the description she had received of him, and from the expectation of meeting him, she turned her dove-like eyes upon him and, with a look of unutterable softness, seemed to say, "My heart yearns for a brother; have I found one in thee?" She told him who she was, and by the time they had arrived at the cabin, they were as well acquainted as if they had known each other for years.

Claude was welcomed into this interesting family with expressions of the most cordial affection. His filial care to the beloved father of the household were repaid with unbounded gratitude. Claude thought that never was kindness that cost so little, so richly remunerated. It was no sacrifice to him to linger by the wayside, and, while he administered comfort and assistance, drank in words of heavenly wisdom that strengthened and renovated his soul. This he repeated again and again; but Mr. Vane would thank him—his gentle wife would bless him—and Mary's melting glance would express a thousand grateful meanings.

The sunny spirit of Claude began to sparkle once more, for the cloud which had gathered so deeply over him had "turned a silver lining to the night."

Mr. and Mrs. Vane returned home in a few days; for she had young children that required her care; but Mary remained with her grandfather, and shared with Claude the office of nurse.

It would be weeks before his broken limb would be healed so as to admit of travelling; and during that time, the mountain-cabin seemed changed to a fairy-grotto, and Mary the presiding sylph, who breathed a spell on everything around her. Mr. Montague was so much better that he could sit, propped up in bed, for hours, reading; and then Claude and Mary would ramble about the woods in search of evergreens to decorate the walls, or moss from the grey old rocks.

It was winter, and no gay, sweet flowers peeped forth from the green underwood: but Mary was such

a lover of nature that she would wander abroad if there was nothing to look upon but the clear blue heavens and "the grand old woods." She had brought her guitar, for Mr. Montague loved Mary's singing better than any music in the world, and Mary did not like to sing without an accompaniment. But she had an accompaniment now sweeter than any instrument, and that was the voice of Claude—the clearest, richest, most melodious voice that ever warbled from human lips. It was astonishing to hear such music as they made gushing through the chinks of that old cottage.

When Mr. Montague was tired of sitting up and reading himself, he would lean back on the couch, and Mary and Claude would take turns in reading aloud. Every night, before he fell asleep, they would read a chapter in the Bible; and Claude thought the poetry of Shakespeare less beautiful than the minstrelsy of David, breathed from the sweet lips of Mary Vane.

What would poor Ella have thought, who was mourning in desolation of soul for her banished cousin, and whom she depicted to herself as a forlorn and heart-broken wanderer, could she have seen him thus closely domesticated with this angelic young creature, associated in such an endearing task, and bound by such tender and near-drawing ties? And was he in danger of forgetting Ella—the companion of his childhood—the generous, devoted, fond, and faithful Ella? No; the presence of Mary only brought her, by force of contrast, more vividly and constantly to his remembrance. Hers was the changing cheek and lightning glance that spoke of the quick-flowing blood and electric spirit; Mary's pearl-white skin, and the soft, heavenly, prayerful eye, that reminded one of beauty not of this world. Ella was the loveliest of the daughters of earth, and he loved her with youth's first, warmest passion; Mary, an image of the angels of heaven, whom he could worship and adore as a guardian saint. No; in Mary's presence he loved Ella with a holier, deeper love, for she awoke all that was pure and holy in his nature.

It was only the poetry of nursing that devolved on Claude and Mary. All the drudgery, if such it could be called, where all seemed a labour of love, was performed by an old attached servant, who had come to take care of her master. It was affecting to see with what tenderness, reverence and devotion, she watched over him; what motherly kindness and love she manifested for her sweet young mistress! Mrs. Vane would hardly have been willing to have left Mary with her helpless grandfather, and this fascinating young stranger, had it not been for the guardianship of this faithful and intelligent creature.

The mountain-cabin was deserted, and the evergreen wreaths hung withering on the walls. Mr. Montague returned to his home, still an invalid, but able to walk, supported by the arm of a friend. It was a beautiful scene; The return of the Christian master, the affectionate father, the beloved patriarch to his own dwelling. To see the several servants, with smiling faces, looking so happy, so respectful, standing each side of the avenue that led to the noble mansion, ready to welcome home their almost worshipped master; to see him bending his venerable head, with such a benign smile, and taking these humble, affectionate creatures so kindly by the hand, asking after their welfare, and blessing God that he was permitted to return to them once more. Whoever had witnessed this scene would have been convinced that the bond which binds the master and his domestic dependents is not always an iron bond, and that beautiful flowers of gratitude and affection may be made to flourish where even they might not be expected. Warm was the welcome they gave the "young master," who was established at once as an adopted son in this abode of princely hospitality. He immediately commenced his studies with Mr. Vane, and his instructions to Mary. By day, an indefatigable student; at night, the teacher of his lovely, adopted sister.

Days, weeks, and months glided away.

Mr. Montague noticed with anxiety that Claude's brow wore a saddened expression, and his cheek a paler hue. Alas! he began to feel the withering fear that he was forgotten by Ella, as well as disowned by his father. He had written again and again to the first, telling her where to direct her replies; and once he had written to his father, not to ask for restoration to favour—not to supplicate for his forfeited place in his heart and home, but to tell him of the friends he had found, the profession he had chosen, and the solemn resolution he had formed to make himself worthy of the name of Percy, so that, in future years, when his "reformation, glittering o'er his fault," should efface its shadow from remembrance, he would dare to claim his esteem as a man, though he had alienated his affection as a son.

In this high-toned, manly spirit wrote the banished youth; and yet no reply was vouchsafed by the inflexible father—no answer came from the once loving and devoted cousin. Had not the heart of Claude

been shielded by a prior attachment, that was entwined with every fibre of his being, he could not have been insensible to the almost celestial loveliness of Mary. Nor was he insensible. She was to him the incarnation of all that was pure and holy, the sister of his soul, the star of his spiritual heaven. But Ella was

A creature not too bright nor good
For human nature's daily food—
For transient sorrow, simple woes,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

But Mary, though she had the face of an angel, had the heart of a woman, which, though it sent no blushing heralds to the cheek, throbbed wildly and warmly with newly-awakened emotions. In the solitude of that mountain-cabin, the light of a new existence had begun to dawn upon her, and that light had grown brighter and brighter, till it enveloped her spirit, as with a glory.

Thus two years had passed away.

The letters of Claude still remained unanswered, and, with a freezing sense of her heartlessness and inconstancy, he tried to forget the Juliet of his boyish imagination. He was assisted in this by a solemn scene, in which he was made an actor.

The aged grandfather lay upon his death-bed. He had never recovered from the effects of the accident which led to the adoption of the banished Claude. Threescore years and ten had left their marks upon his head, without withering the blood of his heart. But death was now near, and the warmest heart grows cold at his touch. Once, when it was believed he slept, and Mary and Claude sat by his bedside, as they had often done in the mountain-cabin, he opened his eyes, and gazed upon them both so earnestly and wistfully, that they involuntarily drew nearer to him, and asked him what he desired.

"My children," said he, in feeble accents, taking a hand of each, and clasping them in his own, "I am going home. The aged pilgrim is about to return to his God. But you, young travellers, your journey is but just begun. It is a weary journey, but if we go hand-in-hand with one that loves us, the way seems smooth and pleasant to the feet. Mary, my darling, you have been the child of my old age, the object of many prayers. I die happy, for I know there's one—whose hand is even now clasped in mine, who will make life a sweet pilgrimage to you. Claude, my dear Claude, I know you and my sweet Mary love each other! Both so good, so beautiful! Heaven has made you for each other! I give her to you, Claude, as my dying legacy; and may the Lord be gracious to you, as you are faithful to this holy trust!"

Claude, incapable of utterance, knelt by the side of the kneeling Mary. Her hand trembled in his; her eyes, swimming in tears, for one moment turned towards him, then lifted to heaven, were filled with a love so deep, so pure, yet so impassioned—a love which, for the first time, she had suffered to rise from the depths of her heart free and unchecked—sanctioned and hallowed, as it now was, by the blessing of a dying saint. Claude would as soon have disputed the decree of Heaven as the wish of his benefactor.

The patriarch was gathered to his fathers. The leaves of autumn fell upon his grave. With the flowers of May Mary's bridal garlands were to be woven.

Thus solemnly betrothed, without any volition of his own, Claude was at first oppressed by the most strange and bewildering sensations; but honour, gratitude, and delicacy, all urged him to endeavour to transfer to Mary the love he had so long cherished for the faithless Ella. He would think of her no more. She belonged to the life that was passed—the life of vanity, self-indulgence, and pride; Mary, to that new and spiritual life, born of suffering and self-humiliation.

Mary's cheek had always been as colourless as Parian marble. Now a soft, bright rose-tint began to tinge its snow, and a lustrous beam was seen playing in the iris of her soft dark eye. Claude watched, with deepening tenderness, those bright and shifting hues. They humanized, as it were, her too spiritual loveliness, and gave her a resemblance to one, whose image could never be destroyed. Claude grew happier in the consciousness of his increasing love for Mary, but an unaccountable sadness seemed to oppress her. Often, when he attempted to lead her mind to sweet thoughts of the future, she would lean her head in silence on his bosom and weep; and all the time her cheek wore a deeper rose, and her eye a more intense lustre.

One evening—it was a warm, dewy, moonlighted April evening—Mary sat with Claude in the long, pillared piazza. The ivy-leaves, already in full luxuriance, clustered round the pillars, and cast their shadows on Mary's alabaster brow. He held one of her hands in his, and they both sat in silence looking out into the pale, silvery night. A slight shiver ran through Mary's frame.

"The night air is too damp," said Claude; for, though she shuddered, her hand glowed with feverish heat. "Let us go in, Mary, lest a mildew fall to wither the blossoms of my May."

"It is so lovely, sitting here in the moonlight!" cried Mary, looking upward with a melancholy smile, "and when this moon has waxed and waned, and another comes with softer, mellower light, who knows if my eyes will be permitted to gaze upon its beauty?"

"Why speak in so sad a strain, my Mary, when everything around us breathes of hope, and love, and joy? Ah! you know not the fear your deepening melancholy awakens, as the hour approaches that will make you mine for ever—the fear that you love me no more."

"Not love you! not love you, Claude!" repeated she with impassioned emphasis. Then suddenly throwing her arms round his neck, and suffering her head to drop upon his shoulder: "Oh, it is this love—too strong—too deep—binding me too closely to life—that makes my misery and despair! Oh! Claude—Claude—I cannot, I cannot, I cannot give thee up!"

"Mark, talk not so wildly. You alarm—you terrify me—you know not what you utter."

"Yes, Claude," raising her head, and fixing on him a dark, thrilling glance. "I know too well what I am uttering; I have wanted strength to say it; but I could not bear; you have made life so dear to me. Put your hand on my heart, Claude, and feel it flutter like the wings of a dying bird. Thus it flutters day and night; I hear it; I feel it; I know that I am dying. It was thus she died—my own sweet sister! Oh, Claude, I love you too well; there is not room in this poor, weak heart, for such boundless love. It is breaking—dying!"

Her arms relaxed; her head fell heavily on his breast; she had fainted. The almost frantic Claude bore her into the house. The father and mother hung over her with an anguish which only those parents know who have seen sweet household blossoms wither thus instantaneously in their arms. Another lovely daughter of the family, an elder sister, had been smitten in a similar manner.

Thus insidious had been the approaches of disease—thus sudden had been the prostration. It was strange they had not perceived, and been alarmed by the symptoms—the hectic flush, the lustrous eye, the quick and panting breath. But they thought the purple bloom of love was in her cheek, and its agitation in her heart. They dreamed not the destroyer was near.

The anguish of Claude baffled description. Mary, with the doom of death hanging over her young life, was loved as she never had been in the hour of health and joy. He would willingly have purchased her life with the sacrifice of his own. Her loveliness, purity, and truth, and, above all, the intensity of her love, were worthy of such a price. That one so young, so fair, so angel-like, and loving, should die in the brilliancy of her bloom, and lie down beneath the clouds of the valley—it could not be. The Almighty would stretch out His omnipotent arm, and save her! The All-merciful would not inflict so fearful a chastisement.

It was not till near the dawn of morning, that Claude sank into a feverish slumber. Then the shrouded form of his adopted father seemed to stand by his bed-side, and, in a voice deep and solemn as the distant murmur of the ocean, exclaimed, "Be still, and know that I am a spirit come to counsel thee."

Claude trembled in every limb.

Again the voice from the grave spoke: "Return, my son—return to the home of thy fathers. We, that love you here, are leaving you, one by one. You have a mission yet to fulfil, before we meet again." The vision faded, but it left a deep and solemn impression on the mind of Claude.

When he stood by the couch of Mary, hope re-kindled in his heart. Surely, death never came in a guise like that. The rose is glowing in her cheek with even brighter radiance. Alas! the blood that dyes that glowing rose is taken, drop by drop, from the fountain of life.

Mary had been struggling with her destiny, silently, darkly—struggling in the strength of her love—that human love which had interposed a shadow between her and her Heavenly Father's face. But now the strife was over. She met him with a smile of heavenly serenity.

"I am calm, now, my beloved," she cried. "Heaven has given me strength to resign thee. Oh, Claude, I have been an idolater, and my soul must be torn from the idol I adored. I have sinned, and deserve the chastisement. Had I been permitted to live for thee, the world would have been too dear to me. I would have asked no other heaven."

Thus she continued to speak to him, who knelt in silent agony at her side, till her fluttering breath could no longer utter any but broken sentences—and then her eyes, bent upon his face, beamed with unutterable love.

Mary died—the sweet, holy-minded creature, who seemed sent to earth a little while, to show what angels are—and the flowers of May, that were to have decorated her bridal hours, were strewed upon her bier.

Never had she looked so transcendently lovely, as when folded in her winding-sheet, with white roses, less white than her "fair and unpolluted flesh," scattered over her motionless breast, her long, soft lashes, resting on her cheek of snow, and her exquisite features breathing the stillness of everlasting repose. A smile of more than mortal sweetness rested on her pallid lips, and seemed to mock their icy coldness.

But beautiful as she was, she was but dust, and she had returned to dust. They buried her by the side of her aged grandfather, and scattered the earth "over the face of eighteen summers."

Let us leave Claude awhile to dwell on the memory of the departed, whilst we return to that cold, stern, and proud man, whom we left upon his bed of down.

CHAPTER IV.

O! that I had not been so stern!
A son had still been mine,
And thus I should not have to mourn,
The last one of my line!

Border Ballad

MR. PERCY, after having banished his offending son, remained, to outward appearance, unchanged—but a worm was eating into his heart; outraged nature would make its accusing accents heard. Pride, to whose stern dictates he had sacrificed his affections, gave him no consolation.

Even Ella, who had loved him so tenderly that her love cast out fear, turned coldly away from him as the pale roses of her cheeks, and shrank from the caresses she once sought and returned.

A restless, insatiable desire for change took possession of him. He could not live surrounded by mute remembrances of his son. A picture, representing Claude in the brilliant beauty of boyhood, was taken down from the wall.

"Oh! cruel and hard-hearted," thought Ella, "thus to vent his anger on the unconscious semblance of his son!"

She knew not the silent workings of his soul.

The portrait of his departed wife, the beautiful image of the loved and lost, on which he had been accustomed to gaze for years, and thus keep alive the remembrance of her youthful beauty—he turned his face to the wall. The eyes, following him wherever he moved, seemed to ask, reproachfully, for her lost son.

Why did he not seek to recall the young wanderer? Indomitable pride still forbade. To recall an act would be an acknowledgment of error, and a stain on the infidelity of his character.

A week after week passed by, without bringing tidings of the exile, vague fears and dark misgivings haunted and oppressed him. Perhaps, driven to despair by a father's cruelty, and unable to contend with the ills that youth and inexperience ever exaggerate, he had lifted a suicidal hand, or given his body to the secrecy and silence of some dark rolling stream.

He would have given his pride, his name, yea, life itself, for one line, assuring him of the safety of his discarded boy. It was when his mind was wrought up almost to madness by this suggestion, he saw in a public print an account of a young man whose body was washed on the shores of one of the rivers of the North.

The stranger was young and handsome, but there was nothing about his person by which his name could be identified, and "unknown" was written over his grave.

Mr. Percy crushed the paper in his bosom, so that no eye but his own could see the startling paragraph; but the image of that wave-washed body never forsook him. Floating on the current of memory, it was for ever drifting to the desolate strand of his thoughts where sorrow and remorse hung weeping over it.

"Would you like to go to Paris?" said he, one morning to the sad and drooping Ella.

"Oh, yes, uncle!" she cried, and, in her rapture at the idea of flying away from herself, she threw her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek.

It was the first time she had voluntarily caressed him since Claude's banishment, and he was strangely moved. He pressed her to his heart, and she felt it throbbing as she never thought that hard heart could throb.

As he bent his head to conceal the agitation of his features, she noticed that silvery shadows were fast spreading over his jetty locks. Absorbed in her own grief, a grief not unmixed with indignation against his author, she had not observed the marks of suffering, more bitter and wearing because concealed on the lofty额aments of Mr. Percy.

But that palpitating heart, those whitening locks, and could it be! yes—that tear falling on the cheek that rested on his bosom—all spoke of the chastisement avenging nature had inflicted. The sealed fountain of Ella's sorrows gushed forth at this expression of human sympathy, this drop of moisture, in the arid desert of his heart.

"Oh, uncle!" she exclaimed, in a burst of passionate emotion, "you have not forgotten Claude; you love him still; I knew you must relent. Let me speak of him, uncle. I cannot bear this silence, it seems so like the silence of death."

"Ella," said Mr. Percy, raising his head with a darkening countenance, "forbear! have I not commanded you never to breathe his name?"

"But you love him," repeated Ella, excited beyond the power of self-control; "you weep for him. Oh, my uncle, talk of Paris. Let us travel over our own country in search of him for whom we are both mourning. I cannot live in this uncertainty. I sometimes think I would be less miserable if I knew he were dead than to live in this state of agonizing suspense. And yet," continued she, wringing her hands, "whether should we go? He said he would write as soon as he had found a home. Perhaps he has found a home in the grave!"

She paused in her wild utterance, terrified at the effect of her words. Twice her uncle attempted to rise—then, sinking back with a heavy groan, a dark shade spread beneath his eyes, giving them such a sunken, hollow look, the whole contour of his face seemed altered.

"What have I done?" she cried, again throwing her arms around him. "Forgive me, speak to me, look at me, uncle!"

Mr. Percy made a powerful effort, and raised his tall form to its usual commanding height. Ashamed of the weakness he had exhibited, the stern disciple of the stoic school mastered his emotion, and even assumed a colder, severer aspect:

"Retire, Ella, and learn to respect the feelings you cannot understand. I am sent on a foreign mission. It depends upon yourself whether I make you my companion. I have pledged my services to my country, and require all my energies for the lofty duties of my station. Never again hazard a scene like this."

They went to Paris, and, amidst new and exciting scenes, Ella recovered something of the brightness of her youth. Her beauty and position made her flattened and caressed in the brilliant circles in which her uncle's rank and talents admitted him an honoured member.

Unmoved by the adulation of the gay Parisians, she remained faithful to Claude in the widowhood of her young heart; and, though his name passed not her lips, it was only the more tenderly and devotedly cherished.

This secret, fervent attachment, spiritualized by absence, and sanctified by sorrow, gave a depth and elevation to her character which softened, while it exalted, the girlish beauty of her countenance.

The time of Mr. Percy's public services expired, and he prepared for his departure. He never complained of ill-health; he was firm and energetic in the discharge of his duties; but his cheek grew more hollow, and his tall, majestic figure, began to lose its upright position.

The miners, that had so long been working in secret, had at length shaken the pillars of the temple, and the stately fabric was giving way.

"I will go to Italy," said the weary statesman, "and, breathing awhile its balmy atmosphere, rest from the turmoil of life."

The saddened mind of Ella kindled at the thought of visiting that classic land—the land of genius and song—of Romeo and Juliet's tragic loves. But where was the Romeo of her constant heart? Cold, dreary silence, was the only answer to this oft-repeated interrogation, and it fell with leaden weight on her sinking hopes. It must be the silence of death or oblivion.

But Mr. Percy found not the rest he sought. The bland, delicious gales, the soft, golden sunsets, the grand and solemn ruins, the magnificent monuments of departed genius, instilled no balm into his tortured and remorseful spirit. Where pride once reigned in regal majesty, the tottering feeling of insecurity which haunts the soul, unsupported by Christian faith, when one by one the frail reeds of earthly hope are breaking from beneath it, alone remained.

He languished to return once more to the home he had deserted, and to feel himself surrounded once more by the mementoes of life's happier hours. If he must die, let him be in the midst of those mute remembrances, from which he had once impatiently fled.

Returned once more to his native country and home, he was roused awhile from his languid and hopeless condition by the distracted state of his affairs.

His young secretary, who had anticipated his return from Paris, that all things might be in readiness for the invalid statesman, had absconded, bearing with him a large portion of the property intrusted to his care.

After having taken the usual measures for the apprehension of the traitor, in whom he had implicitly trusted, Mr. Percy sank again into his state of restless gloom.

At length, after years of wavering conflicts with his own passions—conflicts strong and terrible, as they were dark and silent—he prostrated himself where the stricken soul alone can find rest, in penitence, and humility, and faith, at the foot of the Cross.

It was a beautiful evening in September, one of those mild autumnal days of the more northern latitudes, when the sun seems to shine through golden gauze, and shed a rich, yellow radiance, in harmony with the mellowing dyes of the year.

Reclining on a sofa, partially raised by pillows from a recumbent attitude, lay the emaciated form of Mr. Percy. His once sable hair was now turned to snowy whiteness, and lines, deeper than those made by the engraving hand of time, were traced upon his lofty brow.

Ella sat on a low seat at his side, the book in which she had been reading, hanging listlessly in her hand.

Far different was she from the sunny-tressed, flower-crowned, blooming being, introduced years before, in her birth-day gala robes. Those sunny tresses no longer hung in shining ringlets, free as the rippling wave, but were confined in classic bands behind. The brilliant beauty of girlhood was softened into the paler loveliness, the intellectual grace and subdued expression of womanhood. The brightness, the eagerness, the animation of hope, were exchanged for the shadow, the repose, the pensiveness of memory.

The dark of her eye
Had taken a darker, a heavenly dye.

She was no longer the impassioned Juliet; she was the gentle, self-sacrificing Cordelia, watching with filial tenderness over him, on whom the warring winds of passion had but too fiercely blown. But the voice, that was not in the tempest, the earthquake, or the fire, had breathed upon his spirit, and peace, if not joy, was there. Ella bent down and kissed her uncle's care-worn and pallid forehead. He was inexpressibly dear to her in his weakness, humiliation, and dependence.

There seemed a balm in the soft touch of those caressing lips, for he closed his eyes in a gentle slumber, and Ella sat and watched him till the twilight shades began to steal in, and mingle with the golden light of the setting sun.

The sound of entering footsteps roused her from the deep reverie into which she had fallen, and looking up, she beheld a stranger standing within a few paces of the threshold. She rose and gazed upon him with a troubled glance.

A wild impulse led her to compare the lineaments of the stranger with those of the banished Claude. Of superior height and more manly proportions, there was nothing in his figure that could remind one of the boyish grace of her cousin. His hair was of a darker brown, and the pale olive of his cheek was of a very different contour from the glowing cheek of Claude. His eyes, too, they had the depth and saddened splendour of night; Claude's, the dazzling brightness of the meridian beam.

But those eyes rested not on her face. They were fixed, as by a fascination, on the recumbent form which had met his glance as he crossed the threshold.

Ella trembled.

An icy chill ran through her veins, and curdled her blood. The remembered image of the bright and blooming Claude seemed to stand side by side with that pale, sad, and lofty-looking stranger, and mock her with the contrast.

Mr. Percy, awakened from his light slumbers, opened his eyes, and met those of the young man, fixed so mournfully, steadfastly, and thrillingly upon him. Trembling, he leaned forward, and shading his brow with his hand, gazed upon his face.

"My father!" burst from the quivering lips of the stranger.

With a wild, unearthly cry, Mr. Percy sprang from the sofa, and fell into the arms of his banished son.

"Let me die, let me die!" he murmured, in broken accents. "Oh, my God! thou art great and good. Thou hast heard the prayers of a broken heart. Let me die!" he continued, lifting his sunken eyes to Heaven with a look of ecstatic devotion.

Claude bowed his face on his father's bosom, and wept aloud. That sad, sad wretch! was that indeed his father? And Ella—was that pale, trembling, lovely being, now kneeling by them, with clasped hands and streaming eyes—was that the radiant Juliet

he had left behind? and was she faithful and unwedded still?

Supporting his father's feeble frame to the sofa, and gently withdrawing from his clinging arms, he turned to Ella, and the tide of boyish passion rushed in torrents through his heart.

But such scenes cannot be described. They are foretastes of reunion in that world, where, the dark glass of time being broken, spirits meet each other, face to face, in the cloudless light of eternity.

There are but few explanations to make. Claude had felt it a holy duty to remain with the mourning parents of his buried Mary, till time had softened the bitterness of their grief. Then, faithful to a vow he had made, the night, when in dreams he had beheld his adopted father, and heard from his lips the solemn words, "Return: you have a mission to fulfil," he resolved to seek in person the forgiveness of his offended parent, and devote his future life to his service.

Believing, from the silence and apparent alienation of Ella, that she was by this time the bride of another, he had come a filial pilgrim, to the domestic altar, to offer there the incense of chaste and purified affections.

The young secretary, who had absconded, was discovered and caught, and among the papers found in his possession, were the letters of Claude, which he had withheld and secreted, probably from the hope of one day filling the place of the banished heir.

Joy is a great physician. Leaning on the arm and heart of his son, Mr. Percy slowly measured back his steps to that world from which he believed himself divorced for ever. His voice was once more heard in the councils of the nation, and it was listened to with deeper reverence; for it uttered lessons of wisdom beyond the learning of this world—a wisdom born of suffering, baptized by tears, and sanctified by the Spirit of Heaven.

Claude, once more a Percy, resumed his place in the halls of his ancestors. He had told Ella all his story, and the name of Mary became sacred to her, as a holy, household divinity.

"Mary," said Claude, to his now betrothed Ella, "Mary was the bride of my soul; but you, Ella—the object of my youth's first passion—you only are the wife of my heart."

T. F. O.

FACETIE.

WAITING FOR EVIDENCE.—"Patrick," said a judge, "what do you say to the charge; are you guilty or not guilty?" "Faith, that is difficult for your honour to tell, let alone myself; wait till I hear the evidence."

SCENE: A Hair-dresser's Shop, in Bath. Enter Mr. Sothern to have his hair cut.

Hair-Dresser's Assistant: Hair cut, sir?

Mr. S.: If you please.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Fine day, sir!

Mr. S.: Yes. The clouds seem flying about, though.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Well, it does look a little like rain, sir.

Mr. S.: No, no—I meant wind.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Exactly, sir—too blowy for rain, sir. (Pause.) Hair getting a little grey, sir.

Mr. S.: Yes, it began to turn before I was thirteen.

H.-D.'s Assist.: You don't say so, sir?

Mr. S.: Don't I? I thought I did. (Awkward pause.)

H.-D.'s Assist.: May I ask what brushes you use, sir?

Mr. S.: Buggins's galvanic shockers! (This remark, caused by having seen on the mantel-piece two of somebody or other's electric brushes, evidently placed there for business purposes, &c.)

H.-D.'s Assist.: Oh! Something novel, sir! I was going to recommend—

Mr. S.: A little more off the back, if you please.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Yes, sir. (Pause.) Going to see Mr. Sothern this evening, sir?

Mr. S.: Well, possibly, I may look in. Any chance of a seat?

H.-D.'s Assist.: Well, sir, if you're there early, you might perhaps get into the upper boxes. (Pause.) Ever seen Mr. Sothern, sir, as Lord Dundreary?

Mr. S.: Well, no—I can't exactly say I have—that is, never from the front.

H.-D.'s Assist.: An extraordinary performance, sir! But no great merit, after all, for he's just the same in private.

Mr. S.: Is he, really?

H. D.'s Assist.: Oh yes, sir; they say he leads a most dissipated life. He killed his mother!

Mr. S.: Killed his mother!

H.-D.'s Assist.: I mean, sir, he broke her heart by his reckless extravagance; and his father soon followed.

Mr. S.: His extravagance?

H.-D.'s Assist.: No, sir—his mother.

Mr. S.: Oh! (Pause.) What a brute he must be! I suppose, then, no one recognizes him?

H.-D.'s Assist.: Oh dear, no, sir—all his friends cut him. It's a pity, too; for the poor fellow's on the brink of the grave.

Mr. S.: You surprise me; for the last time I saw him he seemed quite strong and hearty.

H.-D.'s Assist. (somewhat amazed): Oh! Then you know him, sir, do you?

Mr. S.: Yes, slightly.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Dear me, sir! May I make so bold as to ask what sort of a person he is off the stage?

Mr. S.: Oh, a quiet, unpretending sort of man; very red hair.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Red hair, sir!

Mr. S.: And deeply pitted with the small-pox.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Well, sir, now you do astonish me! Well, I never: But what an eye he's got, sir!

Mr. S.: Yes, it isn't a bad eye.

H.-D.'s Assist.: It, sir.

Mr. S.: Yes, he's only eye.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Bless my soul, sir, you don't say so! Why, then, that's the reason he always keeps a glass in his eye.

Mr. S.: Yes it's a glass eye—the other one.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Well now, I never heard that before, sir. Major Blowers (who always gets his hair cut here, sir) went to school with him. But perhaps he lost his eye in America, sir?

Mr. S.: Very likely. I see by the papers he returns to Russia in a few weeks.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Russia, sir?

Mr. S.: Yes, his native country. His real name is Dundrusky. His father was a butcher in St. Petersburg, but got raised to the peerage for refusing to sell the French army hung beef during the Crimean war.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Then, he's a nobleman, sir, eh?

Well now, I thought he looked the real article. Do you know if he's married, sir?

Mr. S.: Married on the 14th of last month.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Indeed, sir; who?

Mr. S.: The only daughter of the celebrated nigger John Brown.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Brown, sir? Nigger, sir?

Mr. S.: Yes, hung—you know; Harper's Ferry.

H.-D.'s Assist.: Why, sir, our papers here would give anything for such a sketch of his life.

Mr. S.: Would they? Well, if you hear the subject mentioned, don't say Colonel Rawson told you, or it might get me into trouble. Good morning.

[Exit Mr. S. (The Hair-dresser's horror when he found out who I was, was something awful to behold.)—Comic News.

A BALLAD BY A BEDLAMITE.

O come to the West, love:

Come jump there with me:

Like cucumbers drest, love,

How happy we'll be!

Bright thunder and lightning

Thy hair shall entwine,

And we'll quaff rosy whitening,

And spirits of wine!

So slumber, my darling,

To the West let's away,

For the crow of the starling

Proclaims it is day.

To the heights of the ocean well

Start a balloon,

Or fly in a diving-bell

Up to the moon!

—Punch's Almanack, 1864.

A FUSS ABOUT NOTHING.

—A man hearing of another who was a hundred years old, said contemptuously: "Pshaw! what a fuss about nothing! Why, if my grandfather was alive, he would now be a hundred and fifteen years old."

DIFFERENCES OF AGES IN DIFFERENT SEXES.

A man attains his majority at twenty-one, but it is difficult to say when a woman attains hers. There are different terms applied to the two sexes. For instance, who ever heard of a lady spoken of as being "under age?"—Punch's Almanack, 1864.

Hiss-s-s-s!—We read that Mr. Bagshaw, of Norwich, has recently had on his premises "10,000 geese fattening for the London Clubs, &c." Dear, dear, how curious! Fancy the Clubs making such a large addition to their number of members! There will be more corpulent old gentlemen than ever cackling in the bow-windows in St. James's Street.—Fun.

PHILOSOPHY OF COMMON LIFE.—There is a depth of policy in the hairdresser's perfidious question, "Try bears' grease, sir?" for it impresses the shrewd worldly customer, who looks below the surface for motives, with an idea that the man's anxiety to sell his grease arises from an assurance of its virtues. Every thinking mind discerns that a hairdresser must

be interested in the success as well as the sale of a preparation for promoting the growth of the hair. The philosopher, therefore, instead of being irritated by the importunity which thrusts bears' grease into his ribs, regards it with complacency as a revelation of human nature, and replies to it, smiling, with "No I thank you," instead of furiously shouting "Go to Jericho!"—Punch's Almanack, 1864.

THE BREAKING OF THE DAY.—A story is told of a merchant staying at an inn, whom the "boots" by mistake, called at an unusually early hour. "Sir," said "boots," "the day is breaking." "Let it break," growled the sleepy traveller, "it owes me nothing."

LEGAL TERMS.—We often hear the term made use of, "a limb of the law." It strikes us forcibly that it is a mistake. The term intended is not "limb," but "limbo," for that is apparently the end of all persons who are foolish enough to go to law.—Punch's Almanack, 1864.

LIBERAL.—Artemus Ward says:—"I have already given two cousins to the war, and I stand ready to sacrifice my wife's brother, rather than not see the bellyin krusht. And if wuss comes to wuss, I'll shed every drop of blud my able-bodied relations got, to prosekoot the war."

PLEASANT PROSPECT.—A DAY WITH THE STAG.—Little T. N.: "Shall you take a single, or return?" Friend: "Well, I shall take a return, because I know the horse I'm going to ride, but you'd better take a single and an insurance ticket!"—Punch's Almanack, 1864.

DEFINITION OF A NATURALIST.—Two countrymen seeing a naturalist in a field collecting insects, one of them asked the other, "Vot's that ere gentman?" "V'y, he's a naturalist." "Vot's that?" "V'y, you who catches gnats, to be sure."

THE BOONAPARTE FAMILY.—"You have not a drop of the great Napoleon's blood in your veins," said testy old Jerome one day in a pet to his nephew the Emperor. "Well replied Louis Napoleon, "at all events I have his whole family on my shoulders."

THE END OF THE WORLD.—"When do you think the world will come to an end?" asked a German. "Oh, probably three months," answered the joker. "Ho, well, I no care for dat," exclaimed Hans, with a smile of satisfaction; "I pe going to Puffalo dis spring."

A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.—A thick-headed squire being worsted by Sydney Smith in an argument, took his revenge by exclaiming, "If I had a son who was an idiot, I would make him a parson." "Very likely," replied Sydney; "but I see your father was of a different opinion."

KEEP YOUR TEMPER, O MOSES!—"Pa," said a little boy, the other day, as he was reading a classical and chaste country newspaper, "What's the meaning of *O tempora, O Mores?* it isn't in the dictionary." He being a very learned man, and with no despise of good wine, replied, "Why, child, it's high Dutch; and when interpreted, conveys a salutary caution, and means *Keep your temper, O Moses!*"

NAVAL NEWS.—The great advance which our Admiralty has made in the art of navigation is not thoroughly known to the tax-paying public. In the hope of making people more ready to receive the tax-gatherer, we subjoin a line which we have just cut from the *Edinburgh Courant*:—"We understand that the British fleet is going to Madrid."—Punch.

THE GUYS OF GUILFORD.—The Watch Committee of Guilford, so noted for its order and quiet on the 5th of November, advertise for six additional police constables. The salary is eighteen shillings a week. Considering the dangerous nature of their duty on the festival of St. Guido, it is a pity the extra two shillings are not added. A sovereign a week would not be too much, considering the pound-ing they may expect—Fun.

WHOLESALE HOAX.

Bills printed by "T. Parsons and Co., 4, Princes Street, Strand, London," were recently sent to a bill-poster at Truro, announcing that "Garratt, the great clown," would on Saturday perform several exciting feats, on board a vessel off Malpas, on the Truro river, which feats were to include an ascent to the masthead, and there playing a violin solo while standing on one leg. Somersaults and other innocent recreations of the Blondin order were to follow, and Garratt was to make his exit from the ship "drawn in a tub by three geese."

The bills were duly circulated, formal announcements were made by the town-crier, and the landlord of an inn at Malpas, who had received directions by letter to make the necessary arrangements, and to take special care of the geese if they arrived before their owner, had been diligent in executing his commission. Saturday afternoon was wet, and the roads were sloppy, but the curious and credulous scorned such trifles, and marched on to Malpas to witness exploits

which, as the bills said, "must be seen to be believed." Others who took care of their comfort while indulging their thirst for knowledge, proceeded thither in cabs, carriages, and carts. A steamer also brought many persons from Falmouth, and, true to their instincts, congregated at the quiet little village, suggesting reminiscence of a regatta or a fair.

The landlords of the two inns at Malpas drove a good trade, but presently each of the visitors began to joke his neighbour that he had been "taken in" by Garratt—himself professing, of course, to have come to the spot on an entirely different errand. It must be recorded for the sake of completeness, although such a result might have been conjectured beforehand, that no Mons. Garratt appeared, that no wonderful performances were gone through, and that the amusement of the company was chiefly derived from the "chaff" which was freely expended upon all late comers as they appeared toiling along the road.

The correspondent upon whose authority these particulars are given, estimates the number of people present at from 2,000 to 3,000. After all, the visitors can scarcely be said to have been cheated, for they went out to look at "three geese," and were repaid by seeing a hundred times that number.

DEGREES OF DRUNKENNESS.

In a case of assault which was before the Hanley Police Court, a potter named Bowers, one of the complainant's witnesses, on being asked by Mr. Sutton, defendant's solicitor, if defendant was drunk, replied that every man was drunk who had had drink. Mr. Sutton asked him if a man who had had a glass of beer was to be considered drunk, to which Bowers replied that he was drunk in a degree. Being requested to explain his meaning more fully, Bowers said:

"If it takes ten glasses of ale to make me drunk—if I have one glass I am one-tenth part drunk."

(Laughter.)

Mr. Sutton: "How much does it take to make you drunk?"

Witness: "Sometimes more, sometimes less; according to the strength of the liquor."

Mr. Sutton: "How much does it take of Mrs. Butler's ale (in whose house the assault took place)?"

Witness: "Sometimes fifteen, sometimes sixteen glasses." (Laughter.)

Mr. Sutton: "How much had you had on this occasion?"

Witness: "I had three glasses."

Mr. Sutton: "Then you were one-fifth drunk!"

(Another laugh.)

BOSTON WIT.—The Boston Post says the Archduke Maximilian parts his hair in the middle like all founders of dynasties. [A very good thing for his people, as he shows no tendency to favour either side.]

A FLYING MACHINE.—Mr. Bray, of Bloomfield, Oakland County, Mich., is making a flying machine "on the model of the wild goose," with wings and a practicable tail. This modern Icarus intends to make his first flight in the spring—time for his second not fixed.

MR. TRAIN.—We have received from Mr. G. F. Train the *Daily Nebraska Republican*, of Dec. 4, containing a report of the "Inauguration celebration of the Great Union Pacific Railway," in which Mr. Train took a prominent part, making a speech, in which he abused England and glorified America. The *Republican*, speaking of Mr. Train's appearance says: "By special request of the ladies, Mr. T. mounted a buggy, threw off his overcoat, laid down his hat, rolled up his sleeves, and in another moment the steam was on, and he was under full headway."

The Emperor was shown by an English visitor at Compiegne the number of *Punch* in which the Bull decline the Congress. It was done in good part, though a little bold, but was taken in good part, and the remark was that of a man of the world and a good observer. The emperor said, "I always judge whether I am popular or not in England by *Punch*. If he represents me with anything like a good-looking physiognomy, John Bull is pleased; if John Bull is displeased I am made to look dreadfully ugly; and I see that, at the present moment, the Bull, who will not accept the invitation, are in a very bad temper with me."

DOUBLE WAGES NO ADVANCE.—A contractor in the Scottish Highlands, says a contemporary, was waited upon by a deputation from his workers, to request him to make "no a pit' difference in the wages, but shust a wee shynge in the time for paying." On cross-questioning the deputies, he found they wanted to be paid weekly instead of fortnightly, but they also wanted the fortnight's wages weekly. "Why, my lads," said the contractor, "you are just demanding exactly double wages." "Hoots, no sir! said one of the deputies, "it's saust as more as less as the same

wedges, put you must shust paid us twice as faster as evermore." After a little parleying, the contractor got his Celtic logicians to resume work at a trifling advance.

THE GREAT BEAUTY OF PHOTOGRAPHS.—Their great beauty is, that they provoke conversation. They furnish innumerable heads for discussion. If the cook happens to be late for dinner (and cooks generally are), they will find how invaluable these new "Heads of the People" are, and what agreeable reading they will supply to even the hungriest, as its illustrated pages present some new feature at every turn. Even an alderman would forget his appetite in devouring its contents. The amusement, too, is all the greater as it gives one an opportunity of criticising friends, not only to their faces, but behind their backs. A Photographic Album is the most amusing antiprarial friend that a lady could have in her establishment. In fact, no respectable drawing-room is complete without one, at the very least.—*Punch's Almanack*, 1864.

WINTRY SUNSHINE.

The beams that gild the azure skies,
And light the laughing hours of May,
With all their glories less I prize
Than that oblique and struggling ray,
Whose fitful influence kindly tries
To cheer and warm a wintry day,
And through dark clouds and drifting snows,
A transitory brightness throws.

For oh! that welcome radiance seems
Like hope's sweet gleam 'midst woe appearing,
Or glimpses caught of joy in dreams,
Grief's troubled slumbers cheering,
As we through fortune's adverse streams
A wayward course are steering,
And sympathy, with gentle sway,
Charms the dull cares of life away.

AGNES STRICKLAND.

GEMS.

A MAN ceases to be a "good fellow" the moment he refuses to do precisely what other people wish him to do.

ADVERSITY overcome, is the highest glory; and willingly undergone, the greatest virtue. Sufferings are but the trial of gallant spirits.

ENVY, like a cold prison, benumbs and stupefies; and conscious of its own impotence, folds its arms in despair.

FORGIVENESS, that noblest of all self-denial, is a virtue, which he alone who can practise in himself, can willingly believe in another.

IT requires more magnanimity to give up what is wrong, than to maintain what is right; for our pride is wounded by the one effort, and flattered by the other.

WOULD you be exempt from uneasiness, do no one thing you know or suspect to be wrong. Would you enjoy the purest pleasure, do everything in your power you are convinced is right.

CONSTANCY is a reasonable firmness in our sentiments; stubbornness, an unreasonable firmness; modesty, a consciousness of the deformity of vice, and of the contempt which follows it.

We cannot conquer fate and necessity, yet we can yield to them in such a manner as to be greater than if we could.

CHOICE OF WORDS.—When you doubt between two words, choose the plainest, the commonest, the most idiomatic. Eschew fine words as you would *rouge*; love simple ones as you would native roses on your cheeks. Let us use the plainest and shortest words that will grammatically and gracefully express our meaning.

MISCELLANEOUS.

LORD LYONS.—It is stated that Lord Lyons is in a delicate state of health.

THE RAPIDAN.—This name is a corruption of Rapid Anne, and the river was named after the English Queen Anne.

AN OLD HORSE.—At Redborough, the other day, a horse, having attained its forty-fourth year, and become incapable of work, was shot.

MAXIMILIAN.—It is insinuated in well-informed continental quarters that the Archduke Maximilian will decline the Mexican throne.

PUNISHED FOR LIVING TOO LONG.—A pauper in the Uckfield Union, named William Novies, aged 82, was charged before the magistrates with refusing to work. The poor old man who had lived 12 years beyond the

threescore years and ten allotted to man, said he was unable to work, but their worships thought differently and sentenced him to 21 days' hard labour.

DUKE OF WELLINGTON.—Lieutenant-General the Duke of Wellington has been permitted to retire from the army by the sale of an unattached Lieutenant-Colonelcy.

A NEW DOMESTIC SCHEME.—An American paper states that a scheme is under consideration for warming houses from a central source, and supplying citizens with heat as gas is now supplied.

BLOACKADE RUNNING REMUNERATION.—The commander of a blockade runner usually gets £800 a round trip from Bermuda or Nassau, and the privilege of purchasing 12 bales of cotton for £15 a bale, which is worth £75 at Liverpool.

TIT-FOR-TAT.—A story is told of a young artillery officer, of a bourgeois family, who asked a young lady to dance with him at an Imperial ball at Vienna. She refused with the utmost *hauteur*. The young Emperor, who overheard her, turned to the officer, and, leading him up to a lady present, said, "My mother will dance with you."

HEALTH OF THE DUKE OF BRABANT.—His Royal Highness the Duke of Brabant, heir-apparent to the Crown of Belgium, has recently left Brussels to pass the winter in a mild climate, and has appointed Dr. Eustace Smith, late of University College Hospital, to be his medical attendant during his absence from Belgium.

THE CONFEDERATE ARMY.—A correspondent with the Confederate army, on its retreat from Lookout Mountain, says: "Roads very bad for some miles; the teams overworked, and suffering for forage and rest. I saw a mule lie down when the harness was removed, and go as soundly to sleep in two minutes as an infant, and that while hundreds of wagons and thousands of men were marching by within a few paces of where it rested."

WANT OF SAILORS IN AMERICA.—A meeting of United States sailors was held in Cherry Street, recently at which speeches were made and resolutions adopted, denunciatory of the Secretary of the Navy, on account of the abolishment of the grog rations in the navy, and the difficulty of obtaining prize-money. The principal speaker remarked that they (the sailors) had the secretary in their hands. There are (said the speaker) nearly a hundred vessels ready for sea, which cannot go, because no hands can be got for them. "Admiral Farragut is obliged to stay in town, because he cannot get a full crew for his vessel. The Brooklyn, also, is shorthanded, and full five propellers are ready to go out of the yard if they had the men. But let us not enlist. Let us take a short run to Liverpool, or Havre, or Bremen, or London, or elsewhere, even to Shanghai, if we cannot better ourselves; but do not enter the navy until we get our grog and our prize-money." The resolutions embodied the same sentiment, and the appointment of a committee was urged, with the view of effecting some organization of the naval sailors now sojourning in New York, and each man who is earning money was requested to devote a small part of his income to forward the said organization.

PRECIOUSNESS OF LITTENESS.

EVERYTHING is beautiful when it is little—little lambs, little birds, little children. Little martin-boxes of homes are generally the most happy and easy; little villages are nearer to being atoms of a shattered paradise than anything we know of; little fortunes bring the most content, and little hopes the least disappointment. Little words are the sweetest to hear; little charities fly farthest and stay longest on the wing; little lakes are the stilllest, little hearts the fallest, and little farms the best tilled. Little books are the most read, and little songs the dearest loved. And when Nature would make anything especially rare and beautiful, she makes it little—little pearls, little diamonds, little dew. Agur's is a model prayer, but then it is a little prayer, and the burden of the petition is for little. The Sermon on the Mount was for little, but the last dedication discourse was an hour. The Roman said *Veni vidi vici*—I came, saw, conquered; but despaches now—a-days are longer than the battles they tell of. Everybody calls that little they love best on earth. We once heard a good sort of man speak of his little wife, and we fancied she must be a perfect *bijou* of a wife. We saw her; she weighed 210 pounds; we were surprised. But then it was no joke; the man meant it. He could put his wife in his heart, and have room for other things besides; and what was she but precious, and what could she be but little? We rather doubt the stories of great argosies of gold we sometimes hear of, because Nature deals in little, almost altogether. Life is made up of little—death is what remains of them all. Day is made up of little beams, and night is glorious with little stars. *Multum in parvo*—much in little—is the great beauty of all that we love best, hope for most, and remember longest.

NOTICE.

Our Subscribers will perceive that we have, this week, printed THE LONDON READER on two separate sheets. This mode of issuing the work has been adopted from the consideration of its being much more convenient to our readers. We also subjoin the principal Contents of the Number and the Supplement, in order that the Tales and Articles indicated may at once be referred to.

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BOOKS RECEIVED.

Selections from the Poetical Works of RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES (Lord Houghton). London: John Murray.—This is a choice selection of short, but in general, beautiful pieces of the poetical descriptive and ideal from the works of Mr. Milnes, and they are compressed within a neat volume elegantly bound in green and gold. The selections are appropriately classified under different headings, which, as a matter of course, at once indicate the kind of poem suitable for perusal when the mind may be fit to be in accordance with the subject. The first are "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection," followed by "Sonnets," which are succeeded by "Palm Leaves," "Occasional Poems," "Memorials of Travel," and "Legendary and Historical Poems." To say that all are good would be slight praise, for there is really not an effusion in the volume that is not far above mediocrity. "The Treasure-ship" is a gem. It consists only of five six-lined stanzas, and although the ideas are highly artificial, still from the beauty of the language and the general smoothness of the rhythm, it is calculated to please in no ordinary degree. Under "Memorials of Travel," we have odes on "Marathon," "Thermopylae" and other classical places. Were we disposed to find fault with the muse of Mr. Milnes, it might be for its want of nature and feeling in the subjects selected under the head of "Sentiment and Reflection." The treatment of these betrays no outpourings of a full-freighted heart, but rather the possession of a well-supplied head, although the subjects are such as would fairly admit of an infusion of a large portion of pathos. Let us not, however, be over fastidious in these dearth days of high poetical feeling, but accept the good with thankfulness, and hope that the future may produce something grander and equally capable of commanding our admiration as are some of the immortal effusions of the poets of bygone ages.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A YOUNG GIRL.—We cannot tell you whom to apply to; but suppose the manager would be the proper person. It would be better to do so by letter than in person.

ANONIMA.—The word "almond" is properly pronounced with the *l* accented or sounded. "Mustapha" has the accent on the penultimate syllable, and is pronounced Mustapha.

LONDINI, who is nineteen years of age, tall, with dark-brown hair and blue eyes, and considered good-looking, is anxious to correspond with some young lady of prepossessing appearance, whose age is about seventeen.

J. T. C. C.—In the columns of the daily papers several books of the kind you mention are advertised constantly; but we cannot undertake to recommend any one of them in particular.

THE AUTHOR of the lines entitled "True Friendship" evinces some poetic feeling; but as our candid opinion is asked by our correspondent, we must frankly say that the stanzas are marred by several errors, both of construction and rhythm; most notably in the first three lines.

Woods.—The two poems signed "Woods," although they possess some poetical merit, are too long for our columns. We, therefore, respectfully decline them; and in doing so, thank the writer for his very favourable opinion of THE LONDON READER.

B. F. B. replies to J. R. that she is nineteen years of age, has blue eyes, brown hair, possessed of a good temper, and conversant with all domestic affairs. She is of a very respectable family, but has no money at present, thinks she would make a good housewife, and is sure she would always "look after the buttons." Nothing more than this need be said in our correspondent's favour.

S. ARCHER.—*Nolle prosequi* is in law an acknowledgment or agreement by the plaintiff in a suit, that he will not further prosecute it, either as to the whole or a part of the cause of action. As for instance, in a case where the defendant demurs to one count in a declaration, the plaintiff enters a *nolle prosequi* as to that count, and proceeds to trial on the other counts.

ADA, whose age is seventeen, and who has fine hair and blue eyes, height 5 ft., wishes to correspond with a respectable tradesman. Has no fortune to offer, but is well skilled in domestic affairs, and has a kind and loving heart to bestow on a quiet, steady young man, who must be dark, and have a comfortable home. ADA's handwriting is good, and the tress of hair enclosed, pale auburn, and very beautiful.

AN ORPHAN writes, in answer to C. H.—"I am eighteen; petite with light hair, brown eyes, and fair complexion. I have been told that I am pretty, but not handsome; have received a good education, am an orphan, and shall receive £2,000 when I come of age, left me by my father. I am con-

sidered very affectionate. If this description will suit C. H. A., I shall be happy to correspond and exchange *carte-de-visite*. It is not every day that a young lady with so many matrimonial qualifications is to be met with; and if C. H. A. be ready, but stop here, and "rest, and be thankful."

ANNIE H. replies to EDWARD WOOD that she would be happy to open a correspondence, if favoured with an address.

A. Y. accepts J. K.'s proposal. She is very domesticated, and has an excellent temper, but cannot boast of good looks. She is just turned twenty-one; has no money, but would make up for it in love and usefulness.

ANNIE LILLIE, in answer to BROTH OF A BOY, says she thinks she can offer all the qualifications specified; although she declines to send her *carte* in the first instance.

EMILY ALICE McFARLANE and ALICE EDITH McFARLANE wish to correspond with two gentlemen. EMILY ALICE is eighteen, tall, dark, and is considered good-looking; and would like a tall, dark swain. ALICE EDITH is eighteen, tall, fair complexion, an amiable disposition, and would also prefer a tall, dark correspondent.

OLIVER BOYD.—In perspiration, the substances perspired are water, carbonic acid, saline substances, lactic acid, and some organic matter. In certain cases of disease, the perspiration is not only greatly modified as to quantity, but often as to quality.

JESSIE BROWN writes that she "has got into a deal of trouble with a friend, just by speaking a few thoughtless words to a gossiping companion." We have no doubt that her friend will forgive her, but as she is not solitary in that respect, she, as well as the others, should commit the following to memory:—

Would you lips
Would keeps from slips,
Five things observe with care,
Of whom you speak,
To whom you speak,
And how, and when, and where.

ALFRED WILD.—We gave you sound and well-considered advice; and for your own sake are glad to find that you have resolved to profit by it, which advice-seekers seldom do. We never shun any trouble to answer our correspondents satisfactorily, but cannot think of accepting compensation in your or any other case. We thank you for your promise to extend the circulation of THE LONDON READER amongst your friends. Do so, and we shall be amply repaid.

A MAID OF KENT replies to BROTH OF A BOY:—I offer myself as a candidate for his consideration, that is, if he does not wish for wealth, as all I have to offer is a kind and loving heart, and have no accomplishments but a good, plain education. Am now twenty-eight, considered handsome, having brown eyes, with golden brown, wavy hair, good figure and complexion, and am 5 ft. 5 in. in height; am thoroughly domesticated, and would try to make the Baon of a Boy happy.

EMMA.—Of the various sweet little effusions you have forwarded, we select the following stanza, which "involves a double light" in the form of a charming simile.

The bird that to the evening sings
Leaves music when her song is ended;
A sweetness left—which takes not wings—
But with each pulse of eve is blended.
Thus life involves a double light,
Our acts and words have many brothers;
The heart that makes its own delight,
Makes also a delight for others.

HAWTHORN.—The inventor of lanthorns was one King Alured, in whose days the churches were of so poor a structure, that the candles set before the relics were blown out. To prevent this, the said king invented a lanthorn, composed of horn and wood.

JOHN BRUCE.—No. The first stone of Blackfriars Bridge was laid on the 31st of October, 1760. It was originally called Pitt's Bridge, in honour of William Pitt, the great Earl of Chatham.

WILLIAM F. forwards the following personal particulars for the consideration of ALICE M.:—"I am twenty-two years of age, considered good-looking, am 5 ft. 10 in. in height, and in a respectable business yielding £100 profit a year."

A LANCASHIRE READER, who has no time, he says, "to cultivate the acquaintance of the fair sex, and does not wish to remain a bachelor," asks us to lay his case before our fair readers. He says:—"I am in the building trade, without any father, age twenty, 5 ft. 5 1/2 in. in height, and will make a faithful lover and a good husband." Who will put his promise to the proof?

LEMY.—We regret that we cannot tell you how to proceed in order to better your circumstances. Patience, industry and a brave heart have borne many out of worse difficulties than those incident to your position of a teacher of foreign languages; and we can only advise you to be patient, industrious, and hopeful, remembering our good, old English saying, that "it is a long lane which has no turning."

INVENTOR (Bury).—You must pay 5/- on leaving at the Rolls Office, Southampton Buildings, a petition for a grant of letters patent; on giving notice of your intention to proceed with the application, you must pay 5/- more; and on issue of law officer's warrant granting the letters patent, another 5/- Then you must pay at or before the expiration of the third year of protection 50/-; and at or before the expiration of the seventh year, 100/- besides clerks' and other fees, amounting to something like 10/- or 12/- more. These are the more official charges; if you employ a patent agent of course, the cost will be greatly increased.

WILLIE.—The common mode of judging whether water boils is by the heat of the surface, but this is erroneous. When a vessel of cold water is placed over a fire, the layer of water at the bottom, and next the fire, first becomes hot; it also becomes specifically lighter, and, consequently, rises through the water, in the same manner that a cork or any other light body would rise. This portion of heated water having thus ascended by its lightness, the next layer, now in contact with the bottom, becomes heated in turn, and also ascends, and so on; layer after layer is heated, at the bottom, and ascends to the top, until the water boils.

As soon as a layer of water at some depth

from the surface receives a portion of caloric. Instead of transmitting it to the layer next beneath, it ascends to the top; so that at the same moment the water at the bottom of the vessel may be heating, that at the top may be very hot, and that in the middle may be nearly cold; and this will be the case until the whole body of water has reached the boiling point. It is, of course, hottest then; for water, when it has once begun to boil, receives no increase of heat, even from the hottest fire.

HARCLE.—The answer to your series of questions lies in a nutshell. You cannot lawfully alter your Christian names; but you may adopt, without legal let or hindrance, any surname you please—your mother's maiden name, for instance; and a simple published statement of your intended change of name will be sufficient. We do not think the fact would weigh against you in any government competitive examination; and you could, of course, readily satisfy the examiners as to the good faith of the transaction.

J. C.—A transport, properly speaking, is a vessel hired by Government to convey stores, troops, &c.

J. M. A.—Square measures are the squares of the lines measures.

F. D.—The *quintal* was the same with the *hundredweight*, or equal to 112 pounds.

ROEBUCK.—Quit rent is, in law, a small rent, payable by tenants of manors in token of subjection.

M. H.—Galileo was the first to demonstrate the possession of weight by air. Tornielli, who was his pupil, invented the barometer.

TYRO.—Distemper is a preparation of colours without oil, only mixed with size, whites of eggs, or any such proper glutinous or unctuous substances. It is with this kind of colour that, it is said, all the ancient pictures before the year 1410 were painted, as also are the celebrated cartoons of Raffaelle.

E. G. F.—Although a sport of the middle ages, tournaments are not entirely extinct at the present day. At the court of Wurtemburg, we believe, they are now not unfrequently exhibited. The attempt made by the Earl of Egmont to revive them in Scotland, however splendid it was, must, we think, be regarded as a failure.

UVEDALE.—It is a fact that the discharge of gunpowder under water is more powerful in its effects than when it is exploded in the atmosphere, and a small discharge will kill all the fish in the vicinity.

A FARMER.—There has been mammy-wheat raised in this country, from grain brought from Thebes. We believe you will get wheat of this description from any first-rate London seedsman.

A. BELOE.—St. Distaff's, or Rock Day, is a name jocularly given to the day after the Epiphany, or Twelfth Day, because the Christmas holidays having ended, good housewives resumed the distaff, and their other industrious employments.

JANE.—Yes. In Newgate Street, London, the hair is brushed by machinery, at a hair-dresser's.

PAUL MEAD.—It is a habit rather than a disposition. Your friend seems to us to have unconsciously placed himself in that category of persons who use their memories as they would so many rows of hooks—to hang their grudges upon.

A CORRESPONDENT asks an explanation of the following sentiment, which was given as a toast at a party last Christmas eve:—"In ascending the hill of prosperity, may we never meet a friend." The explanation is evident, for if we meet a friend, he must be descending the hill of prosperity.

J. S.—The best advice that we can give you in your conduct towards the lady, is to be open and honest with her. Give yourself for what you are; conceal nothing; varnish nothing; and if these fair weapons will not effect your purpose, better not conquer her at all, than conquer at the expense of falsehood and deceit, and only for a day.

A MASTRE.—If he was wrong, so were you in the manner, time, and place in which you found fault with him. If with a good man you must find fault, do it privately, if possible, and some time after the offence rather than at the time. The blamed are less inclined to resist when they are blamed without witnesses; both parties are calmer, and the accused party is struck with the forbearance of the accuser, who has seen the fault, and watched for a private and proper time to mention it.

G. S.—Like most subjects of great antiquity, the origin of British coins is obscure. According to Hawkins, however, those coins commonly called British have a Greek origin, and that they were struck in this island, he thinks, is certain, because they are frequently discovered here, and not in any other country. There is also no period of British history in which such coins could be introduced after the arrival of the Romans. The cause appears to have been that, either from commercial visits of the Phoenicians, or through the communications which must have taken place between Britain and Gaul, Grecian coins became known in this island, and were readily imitated by native artists.

J. HARRIS.—Never confound strength with excitement. Yours is excitement; and the sooner you get rid of it the better for yourself, as well as for those with whom you are forced to live. Strong feelings, however valuable they may be in developing the plot of a romance, must be placed under severe control, if they are desired to work smoothly in the domestic machinery. Love to others can hardly have fair play, when there is a continual bubbling up within one's self. The delicate duties of home—affection—courting, comforting, encouraging, restraining—can no more be performed under passionate feelings, than a surgical operation can be performed by a steam-engine.

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